VERTIGO

Lucifer

BLOOD IN THE STREETS

RICHARD KADREY
HOLLY BLACK
LEE GARBETT
ANTONIO FABELA
MARCO RUDY
BEN TEMPLESMITH

> *"If epic poetry and noir mystery moved to L.A. and had a baby, it would be LUCIFER. Missing it would be a sin!"*
> —JODY HOUSER, writer of MOTHER PANIC and *Orphan Black*

Lucifer

BLOOD IN THE STREETS

Richard Kadrey Writer

Lee Garbett Artist

Holly Black
Guest Writer (Issue #13, “Krampusnacht”)

Marco Rudy
Guest Artist (Issue #13, “Krampusnacht”)

Ben Templesmith
Guest Artist (Issue #13, “Secret Santa”)

Antonio Fabela Colorist

Todd Klein Letterer

Lee Garbett Cover Art

Dave Johnson (Issues #13-15) **Lee Garbett** (Issues #16-19)
Original Series Covers

Based on characters created by
NEIL GAIMAN, SAM KIETH and MIKE DRINGENBERG

Lucifer

BLOOD IN THE STREETS

ELLIE PYLE Editor – Original Series
MAGGIE HOWELL Assistant Editor – Original Series
JAMIE S. RICH Group Editor – Vertigo Comics
JEB WOODARD Group Editor – Collected Editions
SCOTT NYBAKKEN Editor – Collected Edition
STEVE COOK Design Director – Books
MONIQUE GRUSPE Publication Design

BOB HARRAS Senior VP – Editor-in-Chief, DC Comics
MARK DOYLE Executive Editor, Vertigo

DIANE NELSON President
DAN DiDIO Publisher
JIM LEE Publisher
GEOFF JOHNS President & Chief Creative Officer
AMIT DESAI Executive VP – Business & Marketing Strategy, Direct to Consumer & Global Franchise Management
SAM ADES Senior VP & General Manager, Digital Services
BOBBIE CHASE VP & Executive Editor, Young Reader & Talent Development
MARK CHIARELLO Senior VP – Art, Design & Collected Editions
JOHN CUNNINGHAM Senior VP – Sales & Trade Marketing
ANNE DePIES Senior VP – Business Strategy, Finance & Administration
DON FALLETTI VP – Manufacturing Operations
LAWRENCE GANEM VP – Editorial Administration & Talent Relations
ALISON GILL Senior VP – Manufacturing & Operations
HANK KANALZ Senior VP – Editorial Strategy & Administration
JAY KOGAN VP – Legal Affairs
JACK MAHAN VP – Business Affairs
NICK J. NAPOLITANO VP – Manufacturing Administration
EDDIE SCANNELL VP – Consumer Marketing
COURTNEY SIMMONS Senior VP – Publicity & Communications
JIM (SKI) SOKOLOWSKI VP – Comic Book Specialty Sales & Trade Marketing
NANCY SPEARS VP – Mass, Book, Digital Sales & Trade Marketing
MICHELE R. WELLS VP – Content Strategy

LUCIFER VOL. 3: BLOOD IN THE STREETS

Published by DC Comics. Compilation and all new material Copyright © 2017 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.

Originally published in single magazine form as LUCIFER 13-19. Copyright © 2016, 2017 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters, their distinctive likenesses and related elements featured in this publication are trademarks of DC Comics. VERTIGO is a trademark of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork.

DC Comics
2900 West Alameda Avenue, Burbank, CA 91505

LUCIFER
JOHNSON

KRAMPUSNACHT

EVERY DECEMBER 5TH IS KRAMPUSNACHT, AND ON THAT NIGHT IN LOS ANGELES, PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN THE ***KRAMPUSLAUF***--THE RUNNING OF THE KRAMPUSES.

BAR RES
EXLUX
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?
SATAN'S LITTLE HELPER.
IF YOU CAME INTO THE BATHROOM WITH ME, I COULD CRACK YOUR RIBS IN HALF AND DEVOUR YOUR LIVER WHILE IT WAS STILL HOT.
MORE GLUVINE!
WOULD YOU ***LIKE*** THAT?
KINKY.

BUT IF THEY FIND THEMSELVES AT EX LUX, THEY BETTER BE PREPARED TO MEET THINGS FAR ***SCARIER*** THAN LATEX MASKS AND RESIN HORNS.

LOOK AT THEM, PARADING AROUND AS HORNED GODS.
THE WINTER SOLSTICE IS COMING. AND THEN THE TURNING OF THE YEAR.
EVERYONE'S EAGER TO SLAUGHTER THE OLD TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE NEW.
AND YOU?
DO YOU ALSO HUNGER FOR CHANGE?
I CAN'T HELP IT.
I AM ALWAYS HUNGRY.

ACROSS TOWN.
EVERYONE SAYS THAT WAYNE IS A BAD INFLUENCE ON JESSE.
I JUST WANT TO BUY HER SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS.
SOMETHING THOSE OTHER ASSHOLES CAN'T GET HER.
YEAH, WITH WHAT MONEY?
MAYBE WE DON'T NEED CASH.
AFTER ALL, JESSE IS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE...
...WHILE WAYNE HAS A SHIT JOB THAT HE BARELY MANAGES TO SHOW UP FOR.
WHOA. WHERE'D YOU GET THAT, JESSE?
IT'S A BRYCO 38. YOU KNOW MY DAD'S A GUN NUT.
I KNOW WHERE HE KEEPS THE LOCK TO HIS CABINET.
DUDE, YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS.
WHY NOT?
HOLIDAYS SUCK WHEN YOU'RE BROKE.
WHAT IF WE GET CAUGHT?
I'VE GOT A PLAN FOR THAT, TOO.
BUT IT TURNS OUT THAT JESSE DOESN'T NEED TO BE INFLUENCED.
HE'S BAD ALL ON HIS OWN.

SOON...
OPEN THE SAFE!
SURE, JUST DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID.
DON'T CALL US STUPID, OLD MAN.
TAKE ANYTHING YOU WANT EXCEPT THE BRIEFCASE.
A MAGICIAN GAVE IT TO ME TO HOLD FOR HER.
DON'T GIVE ME SOME HOCUS POCUS BULLSHIT.
SUIT YOURSELF.
IT HURTS TO LOOK AT, RIGHT?
BUT WITH THAT PAIN COMES AN INTENSE RUSH OF PLEASURE.
AND EVERY DAY, YOU'LL LOOK A LITTLE LONGER. BOTH THE PLEASURE AND PAIN WILL INCREASE UNTIL YOU DIE.
SHE WARNED ME NEVER TO OPEN THE BRIEFCASE. AND I NEVER HAVE.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

WEARING KRAMPUS MASKS WAS A GREAT IDEA. NO ONE'S GOING TO BE ABLE TO PICK US OUT OF THAT CROWD.
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?
IF SAINT NICHOLAS BRINGS SWEETS FOR THE **GOOD,** KRAMPUS BRINGS BIRCH STICKS TO BEAT THE **NAUGHTY.**
WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH YOU, DUDE?
WAYNE EXPECTS JESSE TO BE JUBILANT AFTER THE ROBBERY.
INSTEAD HE'S DISTRACTED. ANXIOUS. CONSTANTLY TOUCHING SOMETHING IN HIS DUFFEL BAG.
YOU PUT SOMETHING IN HER DRINK?
I THINK YOU BETTER COME WITH US.
WHAT THE HELL **HAPPENED** BACK THERE, JESSE? WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?
FINALLY, WAYNE CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE. HE **HAS** TO SEE WHAT'S IN THE DUFFEL.
IT'S...
DON'T LOOK AT IT!

IS THAT THE JIN EN MOK'S CURSED COIN?
THIS IS A PROBLEM THAT WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.
JUST LET ME *SEE IT* AGAIN. JUST FOR A MOMENT!
WAYNE GRABS THE COIN AND RUNS, JESSE BEHIND HIM.
HE CAN'T HELP GIGGLING A LITTLE.
TAG, YOU'RE IT.
NOW WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
WHEN WAYNE SWALLOWS THE COIN, IT STILL FEELS LIKE A GAME.

THROW IT UP.
STICK YOUR FINGER DOWN YOUR THROAT OR I'LL **BLOW OFF YOUR HEAD.**
JESSE DOESN'T ***WANT*** TO LOOK AT THE COIN...
I'M ***SERIOUS,*** WAYNE.
...BUT HE CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF LOSING IT EITHER.
WHAT'S ***WRONG*** WITH YOU? I'M YOUR BEST FUCKING FRIEND!
PUT THAT AWAY.
IT ALL HAPPENS SO ***FAST.***

WAYNE FEELS SICK TO HIS STOMACH.
I NEED A DRINK.
GIVE ME A FUCKING *DRINK!*
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
HE CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT THE COIN. ABOUT HOW HE HADN'T GOTTEN TO TAKE A LONG ENOUGH LOOK AT IT.
YOU SELL *FOOD* AT THIS PLACE?
SURE.
IF I ORDER A STEAK, DOES IT COME WITH A KNIFE?
A *SHARP* ONE?

IT DOESN'T USUALLY TAKE THEM SO FAST.
LITTLE FOOL, WHO DID YOU ANNOY?

WE SHOULD NAIL IT OVER THE BAR.
WE'D GET A LOT OF REPEAT CUSTOMERS.
AND NEVER *RID* YOURSELVES OF THEM.
THEY'D CLUTTER UP THE PLACE WITH THEIR DYING.
I'LL HAVE THAT.
CONSIDER IT A GIFT.
A BARBED ONE.
THE MOST DELIGHTFUL KIND.

'TIS THE SEASON, MAZIKEEN.
THE SEASON OF COIN, THE SEASON OF OLD GRUDGES AND NEW ALLIANCES, OF REBIRTH AND REVENGE.
MAKES ONE ALMOST **JOLLY** JUST THINKING OF IT.

SECRET SANTA
WHILE IT'S RARE, EVEN IN HELL THE OCCASIONAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT IS MADE READY.
YOU'RE STANDING TOO CLOSE AGAIN. DO YOU WANT TO GET HIT?
KLANG
NO. BUT I WANT TO SEE.
OW!
I *TOLD* YOU YOU WERE TOO CLOSE.
IT'S VERY PRETTY.
KLANG
MAZIKEEN IS GOING TO LOVE US FOR THIS!
I DON'T KNOW. AREN'T THEY FRIENDS AGAIN?
FRIENDS WITH *HIM?* DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!
I'M ALMOST DONE. THEN LET THE DEVIL TASTE HELL!
IF YOU SAY SO.

SO, THIS GUY AND THIS GIRL WERE IN THE OTHER NIGHT. YOUNG. NICE LOOKING.
HOW TERRIBLY INTERESTING.
ANYWAY, I'M SERVING OTHER PEOPLE, BUT I SEE THE GUY SLIP SOMETHING INTO THE GIRL'S DRINK.
GRACIOUS, REGGIE. WHAT DID YOU DO?
ME AND A COUPLE OF BARBACKS DRAGGED HIM INTO THE ALLEY AND MADE HIM DRINK IT. NOW HE'S *BACK* TALKING TO ANGELINA.
I'M SURE ALL THE ANGELS IN HEAVEN WERE SINGING YOUR PRAISES THAT NIGHT.
SURE. BUT WHO WOULD HAVE SUNG FOR ME IF I'D SNAPPED HIS *NECK* LIKE I WANTED?
I WOULD.
I'LL REMEMBER THAT.
DO.

YOU'RE HAVING A JOLLY OLD TIME.
JEALOUS THAT EVERYONE IS CELEBRATING WHATSHISNAME'S BIRTHDAY?
PEOPLE CELEBRATE ME EVERY DAY. I DON'T NEED A HOLIDAY.
KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT.
HALF THE BAR WOULD KILL TO SIT HERE WITH YOU LIKE THIS.
HOW FUN. SHOULD WE GIVE THEM KNIVES OR LET THEM FIGHT TO THE DEATH WITH THEIR FISTS?
THAT'S THE SPIRIT.
I MUST RETURN TO HELL. THERE ARE THINGS I NEED TO DEAL WITH.
I KNOW.
AND THERE'S THE SMALL MATTER OF KILLING GOD.
OH, THAT.
LET'S NOT TALK SHOP, ALL RIGHT? LET'S JUST TAKE IN ALL THE AWFUL MERRIMENT.
YOU ROMANTIC FOOL.
HO HO HO.
IS EVERYBODY READY FOR SECRET SANTA?
FOR *WHAT?*

WE TALKED ABOUT THIS.
I NEVER LISTEN TO YOU, REGGIE.
YOU PULL A NAME FROM A HAT AND YOU GET THAT PERSON A PRESENT. TWENTY-FIVE-DOLLAR LIMIT.
GOLLY. THAT MUCH?
I THINK IT'S CHARMING.
I HATE TO SAY IT, BOSS, BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO **HASN'T** TAKEN A NAME.
THERE'S JUST ONE LEFT.
OH JOY.
REGGIE
NOW YOU JUST NEED TO GET A GIFT.
NOT A PROBLEM.
IN LIKE A HALF HOUR.
OOPS.

ALMOST FINISHED. GIVE ME A DIAMOND.
NOT A BOWLING BALL, YOU IDIOT! BRING ME SOMETHING **SMALLER.**
SORRY.
THERE.
PERFECT. MORTALS ARE SUCH FOOLS. THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST THIS.
NO, THEY WON'T.
UM, WHAT'S A BOWLING BALL?
LOOK AT THE TIME!
WE HAVE TO GO!
JUST LET ME COMPLETE THE CURSE.
FINISHED!
LET'S GO!
HURRY!

THIS DOESN'T LOOK RIGHT.
THERE IT IS!
DAMMIT.
EXIT
IT'S DONE. WE MADE IT.
NONSENSE.
WAS **MAZIKEEN** SITTING WITH HIM?
I THINK WE SHOULD LEAVE.
THE NEXT PRESENT GOES TO EVERYONE'S FAVORITE CHRISTMAS ELF, OUR BOSS, THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS... **LUCIFER!**

WHAT IS IT?
SOMEONE NAMED A STAR AFTER ME.
THAT'S ADORABLE.
NAME YOUR STAR
ADORABLE? IT'S PERFECT. IT'S REGAL.
IT COST TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS.
THE NEXT PRESENT GOES TO ANGELINA!
IT'S A DIAMOND RING!
REALLY?
THERE'S AN INSCRIPTION. RZZH QUASOX FHLAN'N--
STOP!!

HHHHRRRRSSSS

MY PRESENT SAYS IT'S FOR *YOU!*
LUCIFER WHEN IT
ALL GOES TO HELL
USE THIS
SMASH

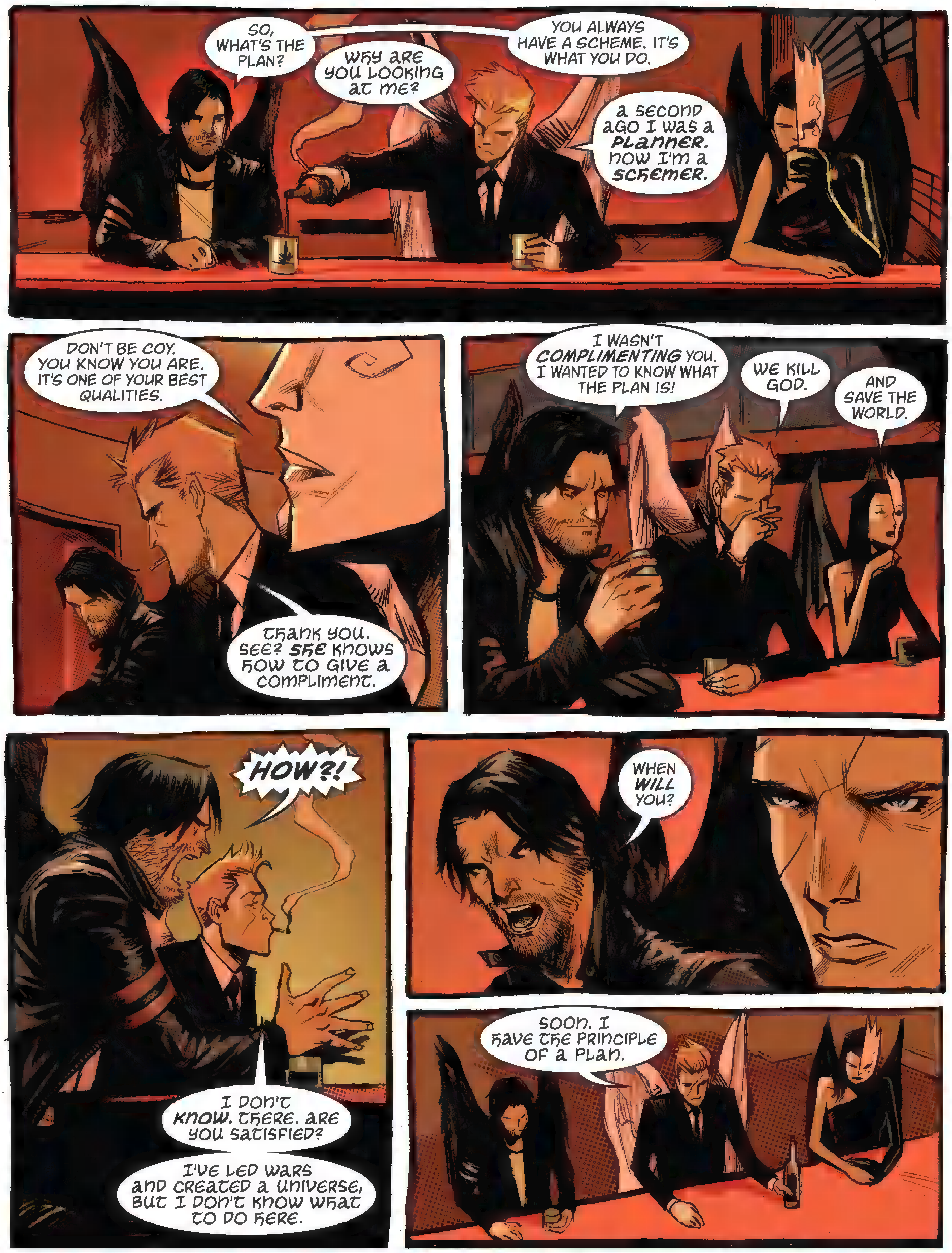
REGGIE, KEEP MAZIKEEN COMPANY FOR A MOMENT. I NEED TO DO SOMETHING.
OKAY.
YOU'RE THE GENTLEMAN WHO TRIED TO **ROOFIE** A YOUNG LADY? DON'T ANSWER. I **KNOW** IT'S YOU.
WHERE ARE WE?!
IN SPACE. DO YOU SEE THAT STAR?
Y-YEAH?
IT'S CALLED LUCIFER MORNINGSTAR AND IT'S **MINE.**
AND WHILE I SUPPORT SIN IN ALL ITS FORMS, YOURS WAS **NOT** IN THE SPIRIT OF FREE WILL.
ALSO, I OWE REGGIE A PRESENT. I'M AFRAID IT'S **YOU.**
AAAAAAAAHH!!

IT WAS VERY GALLANT OF YOU TO DISAPPEAR LIKE THAT.
THE SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEM REMINDED ME OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GIFT GIVING.
YES. HOW DID YOU KNOW HOW TO KILL THE BEAST?
SOMEONE SENT ME A PRESENT.
WHO'S RACHEL? AN OLD FLAME?
HARDLY. BUT MAYBE NOT QUITE AS HATEFUL AS BEFORE.
IT'S A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE.
LUCIFER WHEN IT [illegible]ES [illegible] USE THIS -RACHEL
THIS WAS FUN. BUT I WONDER WHAT YOU CAN POSSIBLY DO FOR AN ENCORE?
COME BACK FOR NEW YEAR'S AND I'LL SHOW YOU.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO SENT US THE WEE BEASTIE?
A COUPLE.
ARE YOU GOING TO KILL THEM?
THEY SHOULD BE SO LUCKY.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM EVERYONE AT EX LUX!

JOHNSON

IT'S A NEW YEAR, BUT AN OLD STORY.
A FRACTURED FAMILY. TWO SONS FIGHT TWO FATHERS.
THE WORLD IS COMING UNDONE-- AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. THE CLOUDS BEFORE THE DELUGE.
AND FOR EVERY OLD LOVE REKINDLED...
...THERE'S NEW HATE.

ONE GOD PLEDGES NEUTRALITY.
ANOTHER, BLOOD AND FIRE.
AS ALWAYS, THE *INNOCENT* SUFFER.
IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL IS ***LUCIFER MORNINGSTAR.*** HIS POWERS ARE RESTORED, BUT WHAT GOOD ARE THEY IF HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEM?


SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN?
YOU ALWAYS HAVE A SCHEME. IT'S WHAT YOU DO.
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?
A SECOND AGO I WAS A **PLANNER.** NOW I'M A **SCHEMER.**
DON'T BE COY. YOU KNOW YOU ARE. IT'S ONE OF YOUR BEST QUALITIES.
THANK YOU. SEE? **SHE** KNOWS HOW TO GIVE A COMPLIMENT.
I WASN'T **COMPLIMENTING** YOU. I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THE PLAN IS!
WE KILL GOD.
AND SAVE THE WORLD.
HOW?!
I DON'T **KNOW.** THERE. ARE YOU SATISFIED?
I'VE LED WARS AND CREATED A UNIVERSE, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO HERE.
WHEN **WILL** YOU?
SOON. I HAVE THE PRINCIPLE OF A PLAN.

Blood in the Streets part one

HAPPY NEW YEAR

POWER.
WE NEED A LOT MORE THAN WE HAVE NOW.
HOW DO WE GET IT?
WE *TAKE* IT.
IF NEED BE.
AT LEAST THAT'S SOMETHING. WHERE DO WE START?
YOU'RE NOT ON THE POWER TEAM. YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT ASSIGNMENT.
WHAT?
I WANT YOU TO GO TO BRIADACH THE BLIND, LORD OF THE LILIM. FIND OUT WHAT HE KNOWS.
BRIADACH? HE'LL BARELY SPEAK TO *YOU* AND HE DOESN'T EVEN *KNOW* ME.
ALSO, I SORT OF HAVE MY *OWN* ASSIGNMENT.
WHAT KIND OF ASSIGNMENT?
I PROMISED SOMEONE I'D FIND *RAPHAEL.*
FORGET IT. WE CAN'T POSSIBLY *SPARE* YOU RIGHT NOW.
BUT I GAVE MY *WORD.*
YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT BACK. THIS IS TOO IMPORTANT.

I WON'T DO IT! I'M NOT YOUR *PUPPET* TO ORDER AROUND!
LET HIM GO. HE PROMISED.
FINE. *FINE.* I DIDN'T KNOW IT MEANT THAT MUCH TO YOU.
IT DOES.
TAKE WHATEVER TIME YOU NEED.
AND BE CAREFUL.
THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING.
THAT WAS WELL PLAYED, LETTING GABRIEL GET RID OF HIMSELF LIKE THAT.
I THOUGHT SO.
NOW TELL ME *WHY.*
IT WOULD HAVE UPSET HIM. THE FIRST BIT OF POWER I WANT IS GABRIEL'S MISSING *HEART.*
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET *THAT?*
I'M NOT. AN OLD FRIEND WILL. SHE OWES ME A FAVOR.
HER?

"WE'RE DOOMED."
NO UMBRELLA AGAIN.
FUCK.
HOW MANY IS THAT LOST? THREE?
NO. FOUR. SHIT.
BANGKOK LUCKY 7
A DOLLAR SEVENTEEN.
WON'T EVEN GET ME A GODDAMN SPRING ROLL.
YOU'VE DISAPPOINTED ME AGAIN, MONEY. IF YOU CAN'T BUY ME LOVE, YOU SHOULD AT LEAST BUY ME DINNER.
WHAT THE...?
HELP!
I'LL SWALLOW YOUR SOUL!
NAH. JUST KIDDING.
I'M GOING TO TEAR YOUR HEAD OFF.

WHAT WAS THAT?
A **DEMON,** DUMBASS. HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW THAT?
I'M SORRY.
I MEAN, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE NOWADAYS.
I'M SORRY.
FORGET IT.
YOU SAVED ME. HOW DID YOU DO THAT WITH YOUR HANDS?
I LEARNED IT OFF ***YOUTUBE.*** DEMON HUNTING IN THREE EASY LESSONS.
REALLY?
YOU ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS FOR SOMEONE WHO WAS ALMOST A CHICKEN-FRIED STEAK.
I'M SORRY.
I THINK WE ESTABLISHED THAT.

HOW CAN I REPAY YOU?
YOU GOT ANY *CASH?* I GENERALLY CHARGE FOR THIS KIND OF THING.
AROUND FORTY DOLLARS, I THINK.
USUALLY I GET MORE, SO CONSIDER IT A FIRST-TIME DISCOUNT.
NICE. I'M GOING TO GET SOME THAI. *YOU* SHOULD GET YOUR ASS HOME.
WHO ARE YOU?
Arabelle Crane
Psychic Detection and Invest
Licensed and Bonded
Demons and Divorces a Sp
I ALMOST FORGOT.
HERE. TAKE A FEW.
GIVE THEM TO YOUR FRIENDS. I HAVE A FEELING THEY'RE GOING TO NEED THEM.
OH, AND I'M HAVING A TWO-FOR-ONE SPECIAL ON ***EXORCISMS.***

A DRINK FOR THE ROAD?
JUST ONE? WE KNOW HOW THAT ALWAYS TURNS OUT.
THEN I'LL GO AHEAD AND ORDER US SIX SO WE WON'T HAVE TO PRETEND.
LOOK AT YOUR SAD PIANO. I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I HEARD YOU PLAY IT.
IT'S ALMOST DIABOLICAL ENOUGH TO BE ONE OF YOURS.
I SUSPECT FATHER GAVE ME THE SKILL JUST SO HE COULD MAKE SURE I NEVER GOT TO USE IT. A NASTY TRICK, DON'T YOU THINK?
SPEAKING OF DIABOLICAL...
SEE YOU SOON. DON'T LET THE WORLD END WITHOUT ME.
I WON'T ALLOW AN APOCALYPSE. IT WOULD BE BAD FOR BUSINESS.

THE GLORY THAT WAS HELL, NOW A RUINED KINGDOM.
NOT EXACTLY THE **HOMECOMING** I WAS HOPING FOR.
MAZIKEEN?
SHE'S BACK!
SO, WE'RE NOT TOTALLY SCREWED?
NO. WE'RE **STILL** SCREWED.

COMFY, ARE WE?
LADY MAZIKEEN!
STAY WHERE I CAN SEE YOU, LITTLE GHOST.
WHO ELSE IS IN THE PALACE?
A FEW OTHERS. NOT MANY. THE REST WERE...
I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS. I SAW IT ALL.
I DIDN'T. I WAS BUSY DYING.
LADY MAZIKEEN, I WAS ONLY SITTING HERE BECAUSE I WAS WAITING FOR YOU.
I THOUGHT YOUR BUSINESS WAS WITH LADY IZANAMI AND TAKEHIKO, WHO, I SEEM TO RECALL, TRIED TO KILL ME.
PLEASE UNDERSTAND, I KNEW NOTHING OF HELL'S WAYS OR HISTORY WHEN I ARRIVED. I ONLY KNEW THAT I WAS WITH MY BELOVED TAKEHIKO.
NOW HE'S GONE AND I'M DEAD AND HAVE NOTHING.
STOP. PLEASE. I THINK I'LL CRY.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LOVE SOMEONE AND HAVE THEM *DESERT* YOU!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, DESERT? WHERE IS TAKEHIKO? OUR FIGHT IS FAR FROM FINISHED.
GONE TO *HEAVEN* WITH THE OTHER ANGELS.
TAKEHIKO WAS NO *ANGEL.*
HE WAS MINE.
STUPID GIRL.
AN ANGEL PROMISED HIM *REVENGE* ON LUCIFER. BUT HE DIDN'T WANT TO GO AND LEAVE ME.
I'M SURE.
WHERE IS HIS DEAR *MOTHER,* IZANAMI?
IN THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS.
I THINK I SHOULD PAY HER A VISIT.

THIS MIGHT NOT BE A GOOD TIME.
ASMODEUS AND **BEELZEBUB** ARE HER GUESTS. THEY'RE BADLY SHAKEN BY THE CURRENT SITUATION.
WE ALL ARE.
YES, BUT THEY **HATE** YOU. WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'LL DO IF YOU JUST BURST IN?
I'M NOT EXACTLY IN THE MOOD FOR THEM TO CHALLENGE ME. THEN THEY'D KNOW THE TRUE COST OF HATE.
I DON'T HATE YOU.
DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY. I KNOW YOUR DEATH AND YOUR LOVER'S ABDUCTION IS A SHOCK, BUT WHETHER OR NOT YOU HATE ME MEANS ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** TO ME.
IT SHOULD.
WHY?
BECAUSE I CAN **HELP** YOU.
HOW?
SOONER OR LATER, IZANAMI, ASMODEUS, AND BEELZEBUB WILL MOVE AGAINST YOU.
AND I'LL **KILL** THEM ALL.
ALL OF THEM AT ONCE? IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, THERE'S ALMOST NO ONE HERE. NO ONE TO BACK YOU UP.
NO ONE HERE BUT ME.

AND WHAT CAN *YOU* DO, LITTLE GHOST?
ABSOLUTELY ***NOTHING.*** I'M UTTERLY POWERLESS.
DO YOU SEE?
I THINK I DO.
WALK WITH ME. LET'S TALK.
AND SEE WHAT REMAINS OF MY KINGDOM.

GABRIEL, ONCE ONE OF GOD'S MOST BELOVED, NOW DAMNED AND WITHOUT A HEART.
A HEART HE LOST IN A MOMENT OF FOOLISH PASSION.
BUT AREN'T *PASSION* AND *FOOLISHNESS* THE SAME THING?
AT LEAST FOR AN ANGEL?
YET, HERE HE IS, AGAIN AT PASSION'S MERCY.
A BOY'S FOOLISH LOVE FOR A LOST ANGEL.
PASSION FOR A WORLD HE NEVER WANTED.
GABRIEL FLIES, PASSION'S FOOL ONCE MORE.
BUT THIS TIME HE DOESN'T MIND SO MUCH.

HHHHMMM...
HEY!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
DID YOU KNOW THIS MAYO *EXPIRED* THREE YEARS AGO?
FUCK FUCKFUCK FUCKFUCK *FUCK!*
DEAR ME. DON'T YOU KNOW THAT *PROFANITY* MAKES THE SAINTS CRY?
AND, TRUST ME, YOU'RE GOING TO WANT *ALL* OF THEM ON YOUR SIDE.

LUCIFER?
HELLO, ARABELLE. IT'S TIME WE HAD A CHAT.
HAVE YOU COME FOR MY SOUL?
NO, YOUR PAD THAI. BUT YOU DROPPED IT.
HELL
REA
SHIT. YOU MADE ME DROP MY DINNER.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR SOUL.
IF I'M GOING TO *HELL*, I'M SURE AS SHIT NOT GOING *HUNGRY*.
HERE. YOU CAN SAVE THE REMAINS ON THESE.
WAIT. YOU'RE BEING NICE.
YOU'RE NOT HERE TO TAKE ME TO HELL?
ON THE CONTRARY. I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO PAY OFF YOUR DEBT TO ME AND MAYBE SAVE THE WORLD.
IS THERE ANY MONEY IN IT?
I'M IN A FORGIVING MOOD. DON'T PUSH IT.

THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS.
NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE THE THRONE OF HELL.
CHAOZZZ IZZZ OUR GREATEZZZT WEAPONNN.
WE MAY NEVER GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS.
YOU WON'T GIVE ME EVEN A MOMENT TO MOURN THE LOSS OF MY SON?
I HAVE NOTHING BUT THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR YOU, IZANAMI, BUT DAMN YOUR MOURNING.
THE THRONNNE IS YOURZZZ, MMMY LADY. HOW MMMMMANY REMMMAIN IN HELL TO OPPOZZZE YOU?
MY AGENTS, THE FEW THAT REMAIN, TELL ME A FEW HUNDRED. PERHAPS A THOUSAND WRETCHES TOO MISERABLE EVEN FOR A MAD GOD TO TAKE.

IT'S PERFECT. YOU CAN MARCH TO THE THRONE VIRTUALLY UNCHALLENGED.
YOU ZZZEE?
WHAT I SEE ARE TWO OF THE GREATEST *FALLEN* HIDING UNDER A WOMAN'S SKIRT.
TWO POWERFUL LORDS OF HELL, EACH OF WHOM COULD CLAIM THE REALM FOR HIMSELF.
YET BOTH WISH *ME* TO SIT UPON THE THRONE.
I WONDER IF IT'S AS A QUEEN OR A *TARGET?*
YOU MISUNDERSTAND ME, IZANAMI.
WITH YOU ON THE THRONE, YOU COULD HOLD IT UNTIL *TAKEHIKO'S* RETURN.
UZZZ. YOU MMMIZZUNDERZZTAND *UZZZZ.*
EVENNNTUAL AND GLORIOUZZZ RETURNNN.
IT MIGHT NOT BE AS EASY AS YOU THINK.
YOU. I THOUGHT PERHAPS YOU'D BLOWN AWAY.
WHILE YOU WERE ALL *HIDING,* I WAS LOOKING OUT FOR THE FAMILY'S INTERESTS.
WHAT CAN *YOU* POSSIBLY DO, SILLY BROKEN THING?
I MADE A DEAL WITH A MORON.
WHAT *MORON* MIGHT THIS BE?
MAZIKEEN. SHE'S BACK.
AND SHE THINKS I'M GOING TO *HELP* HER.
THAT MORON.

THE SILVER CITY.
You few are chosen above all. You are my fist and my sword.
You are my glory and my fire.
Do you **LOVE** your father?
WE LOVE YOU.
YOU'RE NOT ***MY*** FATHER.
No. I am your master, and a generous one at that.
It is revenge against Lucifer you wish?
YES. I WANT TO KILL MY FATHER.
You will do that. And more. Much more.

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING. IT'S SORT OF MY FAMILY'S MOTTO.
"WHEN THERE'S BLOOD IN THE STREETS, BUY *REAL ESTATE.*"
THEN THERE'S MY ADDENDUM.
IF THERE ISN'T *ENOUGH* BLOOD, KICK THEM UNTIL THERE IS.
YOU WERE ALWAYS A VICIOUS BOY, IAIN. THAT'S WHY I CHOSE YOU.
I STILL CHERISH THE SCAR.
THE TRUE WORK BEGINS NOW. YOU'LL HAVE MORE *WEALTH* AND *POWER* THAN MERE MONEY COULD EVER BRING YOU.
I'M READY. WHAT IS THE WORK? TELL ME.
HELL IS SPENT AND GOD MAKES HEAVEN INTO A NEW HELL.
THAT LEAVES US TO MAKE A NEW HEAVEN HERE ON EARTH. A HEAVEN OF BLOOD AND SUFFERING.
WE NEED ANOTHER TO MAKE THE PLAN WORK. *LUCIFER.*
I'LL BRING HIM TO YOU, EVEN IF THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO BRING BUT HIS HEAD.
VICIOUS BOY.

JOHNSON

Blood in the Streets part two

LITTLE GIRLS LOST

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A PRETTY LITTLE GIRL. SHE WON PRIZES FOR HER BEAUTY AND EVERYBODY LOVED HER.
BUT AS SHE GREW, SHE BECAME WEARY OF HER BEAUTY AND PEOPLE'S FALSE LOVE.
MISS COLORADO
THE THINGS THE GIRL LOVED MADE HER, IN THE EYES OF OTHERS, LESS BEAUTIFUL AND MALLEABLE, SO SHE LOVED THEM ALL THE MORE.
THE PURE
ONE DAY, THE LITTLE GIRL LEFT HOME TO SEEK ADVENTURE. HER MOM CRIED. HER DAD WONDERED WHO'D CLEANED OUT THE SAVINGS ACCOUNT.

THE LITTLE GIRL LOVED MAGIC AND FOUND THAT SHE HAD A TALENT FOR IT.
A LITTLE TOO MUCH TALENT, A LITTLE TOO SOON. SHE BECAME RECKLESS AND CONJURED A DEMON. IT TRIED TO EAT HER LOVER.
SHE SAVED HIM, BUT AFTERWARDS HE WAS AFRAID AND THEIR LOVE FADED AWAY.
SHE MOVED TO SAN FRANCISCO AND TRIED TO LOVE A WITCH. BUT HER MAGIC WAS TOO STRONG AND DARK. THEIR LOVE FADED, TOO.
NOW SHE'S THE MOST POWERFUL MAGE SHE KNOWS, AND THE THINGS SHE LOVED AS A GIRL, SHE LOVES NOW BECAUSE THEY'RE THE EASIEST.

YOU WANT ME TO FIND WHAT?
GABRIEL'S HEART.
SERIOUSLY?
PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN ANGELS. REMEMBER WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO, ARABELLE.
IT'S NOT THAT. I GUESS I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE SAYING THAT ANGELS HAVE HEARTS?
YES, AND TEMPERS, TOO.
THAT I BELIEVE.
GOOD. THEN YOU'LL TAKE THE JOB?
DO I HAVE A CHOICE?
YOU ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE. IT'S CALLED FREE WILL. JUST DON'T ABUSE IT WITH FOOLISH DECISIONS.
AND IF I DO THIS FOR YOU, WE'RE SQUARE?
YOU SAY THAT LIKE *I'M* THE UNREASONABLE ONE. SHOW OF HANDS: WHO HERE DID NOT ACCIDENTALLY RELEASE A DEMON INTO EX LUX LAST YEAR?
I GUESS IT'S JUST ME.
FINE. YOU WIN.
OF COURSE I DO.

I WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN LOOKING FOR AN ANGEL HEART.
HERE'S A NAME.
HE'S A FAN OF BODY PARTS. HUMAN, ANGEL AND OTHERWISE.
SOUNDS CHARMING.
A DOCTOR, HUH?
HE'S JUST GOING TO HAND OVER THE HEART?
I DOUBT HE HAS IT, BUT HE'LL POINT YOU TO SOMEONE WHO MIGHT.
Dr. Cormac Vollma
2278 Benjamenta St.
Los Angeles
HE WON'T GIVE IT TO ME FOR *FREE*, AND I'M NOT EXACTLY ROLLING IN CASH.
USE THIS. WHOEVER OPENS IT WILL SEE THEIR HEART'S DESIRE. THE THING THEY COVET ABOVE ALL ELSE.
I JUST GIVE HIM WHAT'S INSIDE, WHATEVER IT IS?
WHATEVER IT IS.
THERE'S A CATCH, ISN'T THERE?
A LITTLE.
ARE YOU TEMPTED TO USE IT?
JUST REMEMBER THAT WHEN A GENIE GRANTS YOUR WISH IT GIVES YOU WHAT YOU *ASKED FOR*, BUT NOT NECESSARILY WHAT YOU *WANT*.
I THINK I'LL SKIP IT.
SMART GIRL.
THE QUICKER YOU GET ON WITH IT, THE FASTER YOU'LL BE FREE. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD GO NOW.
I'M ON IT.
GOOD LUCK, JUNIOR MISS COLORADO.
PLEASE DON'T CALL ME THAT.
FORGIVE ME. A SLIP OF THE TONGUE.

MEDJINE'S JOURNEY WASN'T AS LONG OR HARD AS SHE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE, BUT IT WAS STRANGE.
THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD NOW, SHE THINKS.
MEDJINE?
HI. CAN I COME IN?
EVERYTHING IS STRANGE AND GETTING STRANGER--EVEN HER.
YES! COME IN!
WHO'S AT THE DOOR, LEANDRE?
IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
IT'S *MEDJINE.* SHE'S BACK!
HI.
I KNOW THIS IS *WEIRD,* BUT YOU ALL HAVE TO COME WITH ME RIGHT NOW.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ARE YOU IN TROUBLE?
WE *ALL* ARE.
MOVE AWAY FROM THE DOOR.
QUICKLY.

FUCK!
CLOSE THE GODDAMN DOOR!
I SWEAR THERE'S MONSTERS OUT THERE.
SHUT UP!
WE'RE STAYING OFF THE STREETS TONIGHT.
THAT'S FINE BY ME.
ARE WE GOING TO BE OKAY IN HERE?
EVERYBODY STAY CALM. LET ME FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT.
I KNOW WHAT THEY WANT.
HOW?
I JUST DO.
WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?
WE LIVE HERE. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHO ELSE IS HERE?
NO ONE. IT'S JUST US.
GOOD. WE'RE YOUR GUESTS TONIGHT, LADIES. AND WE HAVE ALL NIGHT TO GET ACQUAINTED.
YOU'LL LEAVE NOW IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU.
IS THAT SO?
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW, SO YOU STAY. I'VE ALREADY SEEN IT.
SOMEONE SHUT HER UP.

THE BASANOS MOVE WITHIN HER, SHOWING MEDJINE EVERYTHING.
THE MEN'S PASTS. THEIR FUTURES. AND HER OWN.
CHRISTOPHER SALLIS. IN FOLSOM, YOU'LL INSULT THE HEAD OF A PRISON GANG. HIS MEN WILL BREAK YOUR ARMS AND RIBS. PUNCTURE YOUR LUNG. YOU'LL LOSE AN EYE.
LET IT HAPPEN NOW.
JOSHUA CARLSON. THE KIND OF LUNG CANCER THAT KILLED YOUR FATHER ALREADY GROWS IN YOU.
LET IT BLOOM.
YOU OTHERS. TAKE THEM OUT OF HERE OR I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR FATES, TOO.

MEDJINE?
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW. THE DANGER HAS PASSED. BUT ONLY FOR A WHILE.
I'M SORRY I SCARED YOU. I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT.
BUT I HAD TO PROTECT **LEANDRE.** AND BOTH OF YOU.
YOU'RE MY FAMILY NOW. I'LL TAKE ***CARE*** OF YOU, BUT WE HAVE TO LEAVE TONIGHT.
WHERE DO YOU WANT US TO GO?
WEST. I'LL TELL YOU ALONG THE WAY.
WILL YOU COME WITH ME?
I DON'T KNOW, MEDJINE. THIS IS A LOT TO TAKE IN.
I'LL PACK MY THINGS.
LEANDRE...?
WHAT THE ***HELL*** IS HAPPENING?

HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING NEW ABOUT RAPHAEL?
THERE'S NOTHING NEW TO *KNOW.*
LIKE MOST OTHER ANGELS, HE'S BEEN ENSLAVED BY THE PRESENCE OF GOD.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "ENSLAVED"? I'VE SEEN WHAT YOU CAN DO. YOU HAVE ALL THOSE POWERS. HOW DO *YOU* GET ENSLAVED?
WE'RE *ANGELS,* NOT GOD. BIG DIFFERENCE. ASK LUCIFER.
THE RAIN IS STOPPING.
GOOD. HE'S CERTAINLY TAKING HIS SWEET TIME ABOUT IT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE WEATHER, THE MADNESS IN THE STREETS, IT'S ALL THE WRATH OF AN ANGRY GOD.
BUT LUCIFER TALKED HIM INTO BACKING OFF.
GREAT. HAVE HIM TALK TO GOD ABOUT RAPHAEL.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
IT'S VERY SIMPLE. I LOVE HIM.
IF YOU CAN'T HELP ME, I'LL FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN.

CALM DOWN. I HAVE SOME IDEAS.
GOOD. THANK YOU.
DO YOU HAVE A PHONE? I HEAR THIS *TINDER* THING HELPS PEOPLE FIND LOVE.
MY BOYFRIEND IS KIDNAPPED AND ENSLAVED AND *YOUR* SOLUTION IS TO SWIPE RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT "SWIPE RIGHT" MEANS.
IT DOESN'T MATTER!
I DON'T WANT A *HOOKUP!* I WANT RAPHAEL!
DON'T WORRY. I HAVE OTHER IDEAS.
WHAT?
SINGLES NIGHT
SINGLES NIGHT
YOU ARE THE LAMEST ANGEL *EVER.*
I KNOW.

GREAT. NO RAIN.
AND NO MORE MONSTERS IN THE STREET.
THERE GOES HALF MY BUSINESS.
THE BUS. THIS IS *HUMILIATING.*
I LIKE THE BUS. IT GIVES ME TIME TO THINK.
THINKING IS OVERRATED.
HE SENT ME ON A JOB. HE COULD AT LEAST HAVE GIVEN ME CAB FARE.
YOUR BOSS SENT YOU OUT AT NIGHT AND WOULDN'T GIVE YOU CAB FARE?
IT SUCKS. I MEAN, HE'S THE DEVIL, YOU KNOW? SATAN HIMSELF.
HORNS. A TAIL. THE WHOLE BIT.
THE DEVIL IS ALWAYS ROLLING IN CASH, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, PADRE?
I'LL *PRAY* FOR YOU.
THANKS. I'LL GIVE OLD SCRATCH YOUR REGARDS.
I MIGHT BE STUCK ON THIS DAMN CATTLE CAR, BUT AT LEAST I HAVE THE SEAT TO MYSELF.

DR. VOLLMAN?
YOU MUST BE MS. CRANE. HE CALLED AND TOLD ME YOU'D BE COMING.
LET'S GO INTO MY PRIVATE EXAM ROOM.
MOST PEOPLE DON'T GET TO **SEE** MY LITTLE SANCTUARY.
THIS IS A FREE CLINIC?
YES! YOU'D BE SURPRISED AT ALL THE USEFUL BODILY FLUIDS, ORGANS, AND LIMBS YOU CAN **GET** OFF EVEN THE MOST PATHETIC STREET SCUM.
HAVE YOU TRIED COLLECTING STAMPS? I HEAR IT'S QUITE CALMING.
NOW, I BELIEVE YOU'RE IN THE MARKET FOR SOMETHING.
A HEART.
I HAVE PLENTY OF THOSE.
AN **ANGEL'S** HEART.
HOLY **COW.** THAT'S A WHOLE OTHER KETTLE OF FISH.
DO YOU HAVE IT?
NO. BUT I KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT. LET ME GET HIS NAME.

I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO *TRADE* FOR THIS VALUABLE INFORMATION?
ONLY EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED.
MY GOD. THAT'S PELOQUIN'S DRAUGHT! WHERE DID YOU *GET* IT?
WALMART. BETWEEN THE PANTIES AND THE SHOTGUNS.
YES, A HUNDRED TIMES *YES.*
TAKE THE NAME.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THIS ELIXIR IS?
AN EXCITING NEW MOUTHWASH?
SERIOUSLY, DOC. CONSIDER FLOSSING.
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR PELOQUIN'S DRAUGHT MY WHOLE LIFE.
IT'S THE *ELIXIR* OF *ETERNAL LIFE.*
IMMORTALITY? *NO THANKS.* JUST SAYING IT GIVES ME A RASH.
BUT YOU EARNED IT. BOTTOMS UP.

LUCIFER! WHAT THE FUCK JUST HAPPENED?
YOU'RE WITH DR. VOLLMAN?
NOT REALLY. THE BOX GAVE HIM SOMETHING CALLED PELOQUIN'S DRAUGHT.
NOW HE LOOKS LIKE A *JELL-O SHOT* A SORORITY GIRL URPED UP.
AH, IMMORTALITY. I LOVE THE OLD STANDARDS.
WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED TO HIM?
TURRITOPSIS DOHRNII HAPPENED.
WHAT THE HELL IS TAHINI DORITOS?
IT'S A MINISCULE **JELLYFISH** THAT CAN RETURN TO THE POLYP STAGE ANYTIME IT LIKES AND REGROW ITSELF, MAKING IT, ESSENTIALLY, IMMORTAL.
WHY DIDN'T YOU WARN ME?
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE FOOL WANTED.
YEAH, RIGHT.
I TAKE IT HE DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART?
NO, BUT I GOT A NAME.
EXCELLENT. ONE MORE THING.
YEAH?
INSTEAD OF YAMMERING AT ME, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER FLEEING THE **SCENE** OF THE **CRIME**.
WAY AHEAD OF YOU.
I KNEW YOU HAD GOOD SURVIVAL INSTINCTS.
FUCK INSTINCTS. NEXT TIME I WANT CAB FARE!

SOMEWHERE, ONE LOST SOUL SEEKS ANOTHER.
THIS BUS IS A LOT SLOWER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.
I LIKE THESE LONG TRIPS. THEY GIVE ME A LITTLE TIME AWAY FROM THE FAMILY SO I CAN KNIT IN PEACE.
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD KNITTING. YOU JUST WIGGLE THOSE STICKS AND OUT POPS A SWEATER.
THERE'S A LITTLE MORE TO IT THAN THAT. BUT IT'S REALLY JUST WORKING WITH YARN AND DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOOPS.
ARE YOU HEADED TO L.A. TO SEE FAMILY?
SORT OF. I'M LOOKING FOR MY FRIEND LORIN.
IS HE YOUR BOYFRIEND?
I DON'T KNOW IF HE EVEN WANTS TO **SEE** ME. I CAN BE AN ASSHOLE SOMETIMES.
BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE. OR CARE ABOUT THEM.
I'M SURE HE'LL BE HAPPY TO SEE A FAMILIAR FACE IN A BIG TOWN LIKE L.A.
I HOPE SO.
I'M **LULA**. LIKE FROM WILD AT HEART?
OKAY. I'M **JESS.**
DO YOU THINK THE DRIVER'S MAYBE GOING A LITTLE **FAST** ON THIS WET ROAD?
I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING.
IF YOU LET ME BY, I'LL ASK HIM TO SLOW DOWN.

SKREEEEEE
KRSH

HELLO?
JESS? ANYONE?
WAAAA!
A BABY!
HELLO, BABY. I'M LULA. YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY.
I KNOW. AND I KNOW YOUR NAME ISN'T LULA. IT'S JANET.
BUT DON'T WORRY. YOUR SECRET IS SAFE WITH ME.
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? HOW ARE YOU TALKING TO ME WITHOUT MOVING YOUR LIPS?
I'M CLEARLY A PSYCHIC BABY, LULA. GUESS HOW I KNOW YOU.
MAGIC?
OF A SORT.
LISTEN. MY NAME IS PAUL.
WHEN THE POLICE COME IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP ME WITH YOU.
BIG THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD AND YOU'RE PART OF THEM.

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR?
YES. AND THOSE LOVELY COMPOUND EYES OF YOURS.
WOULD YOU MIND IF I TOOK ONE? JUST ONE OF THE *TINY* ORBS? I NEED TO SEE THROUGH SOMEONE ELSE'S EYES TONIGHT.
WILL IT HURT?
YOU WON'T FEEL A THING.
IN THAT CASE...
THERE. IT'S DONE.
THAT WASN'T SO BAD. WAS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEEDED?
NOT A THING. AND TAKE TOMORROW OFF.
NOW LET'S SEE WHO WE CAN PEEK THROUGH IN THE SILVER CITY.
A DEMON, I THINK.
A NOT-VERY-**BRIGHT** ONE.
THIS ONE IS CHARMINGLY OBLIVIOUS.
HE'LL DO JUST FINE.
NOW, WHAT IS HIS MAJESTY UP TO?

My children.
Come unto me in worship.
HOLY HOLY HOLY.
GREAT IS GOD.
HOLY IS THE FATHER.
HALLOWED BE HIS NAME.
It is not time to move in great numbers against the world of men, yet there are things that can be done.
HIS WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.
Yes. For all time.

Come to me, Takehiko.
I AM YOUR SERVANT.
It is time for me to fulfill our bargain.
You still wish to kill Lucifer, your father?
MORE THAN ANYTHING.
Good.
And you'll pay any price?
Even if it is painful?
YES, LORD.
I made a promise to Lucifer. I told him that I would make a NEW Lucifer, but without his flaws.
His will and vanity.
You will be my new LIGHTBRINGER.
Prepare yourself.

YOU MISERABLE CREATURE.
YOU LUDICROUS BASTARD.
YOU THINK YOU CAN RATTLE ME BY MAKING ME CONSIDER NOT JUST MURDERING *YOU*, BUT KILLING MY SON.
ALL HEAVEN ONCE CALLED ME BEAST AND MONSTER.
BUT YOU HAVE ME *BEATEN* THERE.
HOWEVER, THAT'S *ALL* YOU'VE DONE.
YOU THINK YOU'VE SEEN THE *WORST* OF ME?
I HAVEN'T *BEGUN* TO SHOW YOU MY WORST.

WILL THERE BE ANYTHING BESIDES THE SILVER POLISH, SIR?
NO, PRUFLAS. THANK YOU.
GABRIEL IS OUTSIDE. I TOLD HIM YOU WERE BUSY.
HOW DOES HE LOOK?
LIKE A SOMEWHAT DIM PUPPY THAT CAN'T REMEMBER THE WAY HOME.
PERFECTLY NORMAL, THEN.
HE WAS WET SO I GAVE HIM A TOWEL. IF HE'S DRY, I'LL LET HIM IN.
EXCELLENT.
WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE? HE WOULDN'T LET ME IN!
YOU WERE WET. CATS HAVE A BIT OF A THING ABOUT THAT.

IS *THAT*...?
THE SWORD THAT GUARDED *EDEN?*
YES.
GOOD EYE.
HOW DID YOU GET IT?
YOU REALLY HAVE TO ASK?
YOU *STOLE* IT! *HOW?*
YOU'RE ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS TODAY.
HOW DID YOUR RESCUE MISSION WITH YOUNG LORIN GO?
A DISASTER. I'M THE *WORST* ANGEL IN CREATION.
CAREFUL. NOW YOU'RE TREADING ON *MY* TERRITORY.
I CAN'T HELP LORIN, OR RAPHAEL. THE *PRESENCE* IS PLANNING WHO-KNOWS-WHAT.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I FIT IN ANYMORE.
YOU'RE HERE TO DESTROY THE FALSE GOD WITH ME.
HOW? WHAT DO I *DO?*
I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU THAT SOON.

IN THE MEANTIME, IF YOU HAVE ANY HIDDEN SWORDS, *NOW* MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO GET THEM.

Blood in the Streets part three

ROAD TRIPPING

HERE ARE THE PAPERS YOU *WANTED,* SIR.
THANK YOU, *CLARICE.*
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WE *OWNED* THIS LITTLE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY.
I THOUGHT YOU RAN *EVERYTHING* FROM HERE.
THE FIRM HAS PARTICIPATION IN OVER FIVE HUNDRED COMPANIES AND ONE HUNDRED BUILDING PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD.
I CAN'T WATCH THEM *ALL* FROM HERE, CAN I?
NO, SIR. OF *COURSE* NOT.
WILL THERE BE ANYTHING ELSE?
NOT RIGHT NOW.
ACTUALLY, THERE WILL BE.
FORGET *EVERYTHING* YOU'VE SEEN AND HEARD IN HERE.
TO REMEMBER IS *AGONY.*
TO FORGET IS *BLISS.*
THANKS, MR. SANTE. HAVE A *SUPER* DAY!
YOU, TOO. JUST *SUPER.*

THANK YOU.
I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO ARRANGE A CAR ACCIDENT FOR HER.
SHE'S A GOOD SECRETARY.
I'LL *ALWAYS* LOOK OUT FOR YOUR BEST INTERESTS, MY BOY.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'D BE WITHOUT YOU.
A LOST LAMB. THE WAY YOU WERE BEFORE I FOUND YOU.
BUT ENOUGH OF THAT. THESE ARE ALL THE DOCUMENTS?
EVERYTHING WE NEED.
STILL, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WANT ME TO BANKRUPT THIS LITTLE COMPANY. IT'S NOTHING.
IT WILL BE A SHOW OF GOOD FAITH AND LOYALTY.
AT THE *RIGHT* TIME.
AND WHAT WILL WE GET WHEN IT'S DONE?
WHAT WILL *YOU* GET IS THE PROPER QUESTION.
WHEN THIS IS OVER YOU WILL HAVE LUCIFER'S *MORNINGSTAR* POWERS.
DO YOU THINK I CAN HANDLE THAT?

WHAT HAVE I **TOLD YOU** ABOUT THAT KIND OF TALK?
I'M **SORRY,** FATHER.
YOU WILL BE **MAGNIFICENT** WHEN THIS IS OVER. A GOD.
I BELIEVE YOU. BUT WHEN I MEET HIM, WON'T HE KNOW I'M LYING?
YOU SHALL HAVE SOMETHING THAT WILL FOOL EVEN THE **DEVIL.**
ONE OF THE **RAREST** COMMODITIES IN EXISTENCE.
INNOCENCE.

I CAME A LONG WAY TO FIND YOU.
I WAS SURPRISED BY YOUR CALL. MOST PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT POOR GABRIEL'S TICKER.
DO YOU HAVE IT?
OF COURSE. IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE **FUCKING** KIDDING ME.
YOU AIN'T BEEN HIGH 'TIL YOU'VE BEEN **ANGEL HIGH.**
CARE FOR A SNORT? A TOOTSKIE? FIRST ONE'S **FREE.**
NO. I WANT THE WHOLE THING.
LOOK AT **YOU,** MS. MONEYBAGS.
BUT IT ISN'T FOR SALE.
MY CLIENT HAS DEEP POCKETS.
WHO'S YOUR CLIENT?
I'M NOT AT LIBERTY TO SAY.

GABRIEL? TELL HIM TO PISS OFF. WHINER.
WOULD IT HELP IF IT WASN'T GABRIEL?
NO. YOU'VE RUINED MY HAPPY MOOD. THERE'S THE DOOR.
WHAT ABOUT A TRADE?
WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT I'D WANT?
IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
ALWAYS.
YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A DEAL, SWEET CHEEKS.
THEN HAND IT OVER, CASANOVA.

THIS IS CRAZY. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW, BABY?
I TOLD YOU. MY NAME IS **PAUL.**
SORRY.
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, PAUL?
WE WAIT.
FOR WHAT?
FOR HELP.
YOU KNOW IT'S COMING?
I KNOW.
HOW DO YOU KNOW? WHAT ***ARE*** YOU?
ARE YOU A ***MONSTER?***
I'M JUST A ***BABY.*** AND HELP IS COMING.
IN FACT...

HI. MY NAME IS MEDJINE.
HI. I'M LULA.
HI, PAUL.
HI, MEDJINE. GOOD TO SEE YOU.
YOU **KNOW** HIM? HE TALKS ALL THE TIME.
THAT'S WHY HE'S SPECIAL.
HE **SCARES** ME.
HOW DO YOU THINK *I* FEEL? I'M THE SIZE OF A BUNNY, I POOP MYSELF CONSTANTLY, AND I CAN'T EVEN WALK.
WE'LL TAKE HIM FROM HERE.
BYE, JANET!
WAIT. WHAT HAPPENS TO ME?
YOU JUST GOING TO LEAVE ME HERE?
WE'RE GIVING YOU A RIDE TO THE AIRPORT. YOU'RE GOING TO L.A.
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WANTED TO GO TO L.A.?
LORIN'S THERE. ISN'T HE WHO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?
I DON'T HAVE **MONEY** FOR A TICKET.
THAT'S OKAY. MY **MOMS** WILL PAY FOR YOU. THEY WANT TO HELP.
THANKS...?

I WANT TO SEE LORIN, BUT WHAT AM I GOING TO DO IN L.A.? I DON'T EVEN HAVE A PLACE TO CRASH.
I DIDN'T REALLY THINK THIS THROUGH.
GIVE HER THE NOTE, LEANDRE.
IT HAS WHAT YOU NEED.
ARABELLE CRANE. SHE'LL HELP ME FIND LORIN?
EXACTLY.
WHAT IS SHE? A COP?
SHE'S A DETECTIVE. SHE CAN FIND *ANYBODY.*
WHEN YOU GET THERE, GO RIGHT IN. THE DOOR WILL BE OPEN.
SHE'S EXPECTING ME?
ARABELLE CRANE!
ADDRESS:
NO. SHE JUST FORGETS. DO YOU HAVE A PHONE?
SURE.
WHEN YOU FIND HER, CALL 9-1-1. THEN CALL THE NUMBER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.
IS IT HER DOCTOR?
HE'S AS FAR FROM A DOCTOR AS YOU CAN BE.

THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS. IN THE RUINS OF HELL.
IT'S AGREED, THEN.
THOUGH OUR FORCES ARE SMALL, WE SHALL BAND TOGETHER AND DISPATCH MAZIKEEN, DIVIDING HELL BETWEEN US.
BUT I GET THE THRONE.
AGREED.
AGRRREED.

A WORD OF WARNING. I WILL **NOT** GO LIGHTLY ON ANYONE WHO BETRAYS ME OR BREAKS OUR COMPACT.
NNNEVER, MMMY LADYYY.
I PLEDGE MYSELF TO OUR BARGAIN.
AND WHAT DO **YOU** HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF, CHILD?
MAZIKEEN DOESN'T SUSPECT A THING. I'M A HARMLESS LITTLE SPECTER. HER PET.
YOU MIGHT SAVE US A LOT OF TROUBLE AFTER ALL. TAKE THIS **NEEDLE**.
WHEN MAZIKEEN LOOKS AWAY, STRIKE HER ON THE BACK OF THE NECK.
WILL IT HURT?
EXQUISITELY. SHE AND LUCIFER MUST **PAY** FOR WHAT THEY DID TO MY SON.

HOLD THERE, **EX-LORD OF HELL.** WHAT DO YOU WANT?
A BETTER GREETING WOULD BE NICE.
SHORT OF THAT, I WANT TO SPEAK TO **BRIADACH THE BLIND.**
NOW RUN OFF AND TELL HIM I'M HERE.
HE HAS NO DESIRE TO SPEAK TO YOU.
I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT HIS DESIRES.
YOU THINK YOU CAN COME IN HERE AND TREAT US LIKE YOUR SERVANTS?
YES.
THAT WE'LL **BOW** AND **SCRAPE** BEFORE YOU?
UNQUESTIONABLY.
IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S **GOOD** FOR YOU.
THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE YOU WERE HERE LAST.
YOU CAN'T THREATEN OR HARM US ANYMORE.
AND WHY, **PRAY TELL,** IS THAT?

FROM THE VERY FILTH OF THIS UNHOLY CITY WE'VE FASHIONED A GOLEM ARMY TO PROTECT US.
THEY ARE UNSTOPPABLE. BEYOND LIFE AND DEATH.
THEY ARE MADNESS AND FURY.
AND THEY OBEY ONLY US.
I'M SORRY. WERE YOU SAYING SOMETHING EARLIER?
I'LL... TAKE YOU TO BRIADACH.
YES. THAT WAS IT.

HELLO, BRIADACH. HOW ARE YOU?
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND, BUT I'VE *KILLED* YOUR RECEPTION COMMITTEE.
LORD LUCIFER? WHY ARE YOU HERE? TO *TORMENT* A SICK OLD MAN?
NOT AT ALL. I'VE SIMPLY COME TO HEAR WHAT YOU KNOW OF THE *PRESENCE.*
AND WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME IN RETURN?
YOUR LIFE AND THE LIVES OF YOUR RABBLE.
YOU SMELL *FOUL,* LUCIFER. BUT IT SUITS YOU.
YOU ARE CORRUPTION INCARNATE. YOU CARRY *DEATH* IN YOUR TOUCH.
NO MORE COMPLIMENTS, *PLEASE.* YOU'LL MAKE ME *BLUSH.*
NOW, TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.
I ALREADY HAVE.
BUT YOU'RE TOO DULL TO KNOW IT.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULD BE A BIT CLEARER?
NO.
NOW *KILL ME* AND PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY.
OH, I'D *NEVER* DO THAT.

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA.
HI, SIS. LONG TIME NO SEE.
HI, PAUL. I'VE *MISSED* YOU.
YOU, TOO. MEET MY NEW FRIENDS.
I'M MEDJINE.
THIS IS MY BROTHER, LEANDRE.
AND THESE ARE OUR MOMS, ROSA AND MALLORY.
YOU'RE *ALL* WELCOME HERE. PLEASE COME INSIDE.
THIS HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING.
SO HAS MY DIAPER. SOMEONE NEEDS TO CHANGE ME.

MEDJINE TELLS US THAT YOU'RE A **SHAMAN** OR A MEDICINE WOMAN.
I'M AFRAID WE DON'T KNOW THE PROPER TERM. I HOPE THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
YES, IT IS. AND YES, I AM.
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU **KNEW** WE WERE COMING.
MEDJINE AND I HAVE SORT OF SEEN EACH OTHER FROM A LONG WAY OFF.
DO YOU KNOW WHY PAUL IS HERE?
I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE...
YES YOU ARE. I **NEED** TO SEE LUCIFER.
LUCIFER?
I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT EITHER.
OF **COURSE** I'LL TAKE US. WE'LL GO ON A WALK.
CAN I INVITE A FRIEND?
IF YOU THINK SHE CAN FIND US.
DON'T WORRY. WE CAN **ALWAYS** FIND EACH OTHER.

ROSEMARY. YOU'RE BACK. WHERE DID YOU GO?
SORRY. I WAS THINKING ABOUT TAKEHIKO AND I GUESS I GOT LOST.
THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO MOON OVER LOST LOVES. WE HAVE MUCH TO DO.
IZANAMI AND HER DOGS WON'T WAIT MUCH LONGER TO ATTACK ME.
WE PLEDGE OUR LIVES TO YOU, QUEEN OF HELL.
I AM YEQON. I CAN SHIFT SHAPES, BREW POTIONS, AND CURSE THE LIVING.
AND I WOULD DIE FOR YOU.
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU PROMISE, SIR DEMON. I MIGHT HAVE TO TAKE YOU UP ON IT.
ANYTHING, MY LADY.
ANYTHING?

WHAT THE ***FUCK*** DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
SERIOUSLY, THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU.
I'M NOT KIDDING.
OH HELL.
YOU AIN'T BEEN ***HIGH*** 'TIL YOU'VE BEEN ***ANGEL HIGH.***
PIZZ
HELLO? IS ANYBODY HOME?
OH ***SHIT...***
ZA

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER, SAFE IN THEIR HIDING PLACE WHERE NO ONE CAN FIND THEM.
BUT WHO OR WHAT IS REALLY SAFE?
MOM, I THINK I HAVE TO GO ON A TRIP.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
NOT WE. JUST ME.
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?
IT'S SOMEWHERE YOU CAN'T GO.
I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO GO, BUT I HAVE TO.
IT'S MEDJINE, ISN'T IT?
YEAH.
IT'S GOING TO BE DANGEROUS.
MAYBE.
I NEVER WANTED THIS FOR YOU.
I KNOW, BUT HOW MANY PEOPLE GET THE LIFE THEY WANTED?
STOP TALKING LIKE AN ADULT, WEIRDO.
I'M NOT THE WEIRDO. YOU'RE THE WEIRDO.
IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO BE SCARED?
I'M SCARED, TOO. WE CAN BE SCARED TOGETHER.

WHAT? WHO IS THIS?
SHE DID *WHAT?*
DID YOU CALL 9-1-1?
GOOD. GO WITH HER.
BRING ME A NEW DRINK. THIS *OLIVE* IS STARING AT ME.
WHAT'S WRONG?
AN ACQUAINTANCE IS IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM.
DO YOU WANT TO GO? I CAN GO WITH YOU.
SHE MIGHT NOT LIVE. THEN WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?
I CAN'T *BELIEVE* YOU SOMETIMES!
A *LETTER* FOR YOU, SIR.
WHAT DOES IT *SAY?*
IT'S AN *EVICTION NOTICE* FOR EX LUX.
YOU WERE *RIGHT* EARLIER.
I'M *NOT* THE WORST ANGEL IN CREATION.

Blood in the Streets part four

DEATH & DECEPTION

THESE ARE THE REMAINING DEMONS THAT THE PRESENCE DIDN'T SEIZE FOR HIMSELF?
YES, MY QUEEN. THERE ARE OTHERS, BUT THE FILTH ARE NOW IN THE SERVICE OF LADY IZANAMI, ASMODEUS, AND BEELZEBUB.
VERY GOOD, YEQON. YOU'VE DONE WELL.
ANYTHING FOR YOU.
WE ARE READY TO *DIE* IN YOUR SERVICE.
THIS IS OUR ARMY? I DON'T KNOW...
HUSH. LOYALTY CAN OFTEN TRUMP NUMBERS. THESE TROOPS WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH.
IT'S TRUE, MADAME ROSEMARY.
BARAQEL HERE CAN SPEW ***BOILING BILE*** INTO THE EYES OF OUR FOES.
ME, I CAN BREW POISONS, SHIFT SHAPES, AND GUT ANY BASTARD IN OUR WAY.
"A dimple on the chin, the devil within." —Pope Paul VI

WHY SO QUIET? WE HAVE ALL THE ARMY WE NEED.
IT'S JUST...
...I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A WAR BEFORE.
YOU'LL LOVE IT. YOU'LL NEVER FEEL MORE ALIVE.
SO TO SPEAK.
I'LL BE BRAVE. I'LL TRY.
BUT DO WE HAVE TO KILL TAKEHIKO'S MOTHER?
IZANAMI WILL DIE FIRST. THEN THE SCUM WHO FOLLOW HER.
STILL, SHE'S SORT OF FAMILY.
A FAMILY WHO MURDERED YOU. DON'T FORGET THAT IT WAS THEIR DECEPTION WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT YOUR DEATH.
YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE. FORGIVE ME.
THERE IS NOTHING TO FORGIVE.
STAY CLOSE TO ME. WE'LL BOTH BE AVENGED SHORTLY.
YEQON, YOU AND YOUR TWO FRIENDS COME ALONG. LET US STRATEGIZE.

IS THAT THING **REAL**, BOSS?
IT WOULD APPEAR SO.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
NOTICE OF EVICTIO
I'M WONDERING THE SAME THING.
WHICH IS MORE ELEGANT: **DECAPITATION** OR **EVISCERATION**?
OH BOY. WHICH IS FASTER?
GOOD POINT. DECAPITATION IS TOO **FAST**. EVISCERATION IT IS, THEN.
SINCE YOU'RE ON A ROLL, REGGIE, ANSWER ME THIS:
IF SOMEONE, SAY A SEER OR A SAGE, SAID YOU SMELLED FOUL AND REEKED OF CORRUPTION, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
TAKE A SHOWER?
I DON'T THINK HE MEANT THAT KIND OF **FOUL**.
MAYBE HE MEANT LIKE A BIRD. HAVE YOU BEEN AROUND, LIKE, CHICKENS OR ANYTHING LATELY?
JUST BRING ME A DRINK.

WE HAVE CONFERRED AND DECIDED ON A PLAN.
IT'S DANGEROUS. MANY WILL *DIE.*
ARE YOU PREPARED?
AYE!
YES!
KILL THE BASTARDS!
EXCELLENT! WE WILL ATTACK SOON.
GATHER YOUR *WEAPONS!*
I'M SO SORRY, MAZIKEEN...
...BUT I CAN'T LET YOU DO IT.

AAAAAGHH!

WHERE'S THE GHOST?

SOMEONE'S HEADING YOUR WAY, BOSS.
DO YOU RECOGNIZE HIM?
NOPE.
WONDERFUL. MAYBE I'LL GET TO PRACTICE MY EVISCERATION TECHNIQUE. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
MR. MORNINGSTAR? I'M *IAIN SANTE.* I THINK WE HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON.
AND WHAT, PRAY TELL, MIGHT THAT BE?
NOTICE OF EVICTION
SIT DOWN. I BELIEVE I KNOW YOUR NAME.
AREN'T YOU SOME SORT OF REAL ESTATE *WUNDERKIND?*
THAT'S IT EXACTLY.
AND HOW DOES SOMEONE LIKE YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE SAME POSITION AS ME, AN *INNOCENT* IN THESE MATTERS?
NOTICE OF EVICTION
I KNOW YOUR NAME, TOO. AND I DOUBT YOU'RE INNOCENT ABOUT MUCH.
DO YOU?
THAT WAS A *COMPLIMENT.*
I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT.

I'M HERE BECAUSE I THINK WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER.
How's that?
WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES TO RECEIVE THESE NOTICES. SEVERAL OTHER PROMINENT PEOPLE HAVE, TOO.
It's nice to know I'm in good company, at least.
MR. MORNINGSTAR, I THINK SOMEONE IS OUT TO GET US.
Do you have any suspects in mind?
NONE YET. BUT I BELIEVE THAT IF WE ALL BAND TOGETHER, WE CAN FIGHT THE CULPRIT.
How are we going to do that?
I HAVE A **LOT** OF LAWYERS.
Ex Lux is **awash** in lawyers. Good ones, bad ones, shady ones, and otherwise.
You see, I'm not by nature a **joiner**, so you're going to have to do better than that.
FINE. I'LL LAY IT OUT PLAINLY.
I PROPOSE THAT WE JOIN FORCES AND NOT JUST BEAT THE EVICTION PROCEEDINGS, BUT **UTTERLY DESTROY** WHOEVER IT IS COMING AFTER US.
Now you have my attention.

IZANAMI'S PALACE, THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS.
ROSEMARY. CHILD, YOU'RE WHITE AS A GHOST.
HA HA HA HA!
ZZZ ZZZ ZZZZ ZZZ!
I *DID* IT.
DID WHAT?
I *KILLED* MAZIKEEN.
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE?
THE GHOST IS *LYING.* OR *MAD.*
I AGREEZZZ.
YOU THINK *SO?*
LOOK OUTSIDE.
MARVELOUS.
SIMPLY MARVELOUS.

I CAN ROUND UP SOME OF THE OTHER EVICTION RECIPIENTS AND WE CAN POOL OUR RESOURCES.
actually, I'm not all that keen to have ex Lux's position known around town.
It's an image problem. I'm sure you understand.
I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY AND CAN SYMPATHIZE.
WHY DON'T I WORK AS A GO-BETWEEN FOR YOU AND THE REST OF THE GROUP? NO ONE NEEDS TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
Why would you do that? What do you get out of it?
Why not just **protect yourself?**
WE'RE STRONGER AS A TEAM. WITHOUT KNOWING WHO OR WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE FRIENDS ON YOUR SIDE.
are we **friends** now?
I HOPE WE MIGHT BE.
PHONE CALL, BOSS.
I HAVE TO MEET WITH SOME OF THE OTHERS ANYWAY.
IT WAS GOOD **MEETING** YOU, MR. MORNINGSTAR. I THINK WE CAN DO GREAT THINGS TOGETHER.
I've already done one or two great things, Iain. What I need now is someone to **pluck a fly** from my soup.
WOW. HE SEEMS **REALLY** NICE.
You think so?
YEAH! I GET A REALLY GOOD FEELING FROM HIM.
Hmm.

SHE SAID HER NAME IS "LULA."
HELLO, LULA. HOW IS ARABELLE? STILL WITH US?
BARELY. SHE'S HOOKED UP TO A BUNCH OF MACHINES.
I MEAN, I DON'T EVEN *KNOW* THIS CHICK.
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO *DO?*
LULA, I NEED YOU TO LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY.
I NEED YOU TO GO BACK TO ARABELLE'S APARTMENT, SCOOP UP ALL THE DRUGS SHE TOOK AND BRING THEM TO ME.
WHERE ARE YOU?
AT A CLUB CALLED EX LUX. TELL ANY CABBIE. THEY'LL KNOW IT.
I DON'T HAVE ANY *MONEY.*
I DO. BRING ME WHAT I ASKED FOR AND YOU WILL, TOO.
OKAY.
BE HERE AT EIGHT. I HAVE TO GET TO ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.
OH, AND TRY NOT TO BREATHE IN ANY OF THE POWDER.
OR GET ANY IN YOUR EYES. OR ON YOUR SKIN.
IN FACT, STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM IT AS YOU CAN.
AM I *SAFE* WITH THIS STUFF?
PERFECTLY.

HI, ASBEL.
HI, GABRIEL. WHO'S YOUR CUTE FRIEND?
HE'S LORIN. SAY HI, LORIN.
HI.
HI, YOURSELF. HOW DID A MORSEL LIKE YOU HOOK UP WITH THIS SAD SACK?
HEY.
RELAX. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU TWO STRAPPING LADS?
I HAVE TO GO OUT OF TOWN AND LORIN NEEDS SOMEWHERE SAFE.
CAN YOU GIVE HIM A JOB OR SOMETHING?
OH. HOW BORING.
WELL, RUMYAL GOT MANGE, SO WE COULD USE A NEW BARBACK.
THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN DO?
TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.
WE'LL TAKE IT.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO FIND YOU-KNOW-WHO. YOUR SPECIAL FRIEND.

THANK YOU. I TAKE BACK ALL THE STUFF I SAID ABOUT YOU EARLIER.
I WAS *UPSET.*
IT'S OKAY.
NICE. HOT MAN-ON-MAN ACTION.
DON'T STOP ON MY ACCOUNT, BOYS.
WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN YOU FIND HIM? YOU SAID HE WAS HYPNOTIZED.
I DON'T KNOW. THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO SEE.
I PROBABLY WON'T BE ABLE TO BRING HIM BACK RIGHT AWAY.
I UNDERSTAND.
OKAY, YOU'RE BEING *BORING* AGAIN.
YOU, NEW SLAVE BOY. COME WITH ME.
YOU, SCRUFFY ANGEL. MOPE SOMEWHERE ELSE. *SOME* OF US HAVE WORK TO DO.
OKAY. WE'RE DOING THIS.
AND WE'RE *NOT* MESSING IT UP.
I HOPE.

THE DESERT OUTSIDE FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA.
HOW DOES A SPIRIT WALK WORK?
THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT THIS IS. IT'S JUST A *WALK.*
SORRY.
THAT'S OKAY.
THIS IS FUN. WHY DOESN'T *EVERYONE* GET CARRIED EVERYWHERE?
WHEN DO WE *START?*
WE ALREADY HAVE.
WE'RE DOING IT NOW? I DIDN'T KNOW.
THAT MEANS WE'RE DOING IT RIGHT.
MEDJINE!
NOEMA!
I WASN'T SURE YOU'D FIND ME.
WE'LL *ALWAYS* FIND EACH OTHER.
WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?
NOEMA, THIS IS RACHEL AND PAUL.
THIS IS MY FRIEND *NOEMA.* WE'RE SORT OF CONNECTED...
YEAH, *I* DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CALL IT EITHER.

WHERE **ARE** WE?
WE'RE NOT **SPIRIT WALKING,** I KNOW THAT. WE'RE JUST SORT OF WALKING FUNNY.
WE'RE SLIGHTLY OUT OF THE ORDINARY WORLD. NOT FAR. JUST FAR ENOUGH.
WE'RE GOING TO SEE SOMEONE I NEVER THOUGHT I'D WANT TO SEE AGAIN.
WHO?
me.
THE DEVIL.
HI, LUCIFER.
Hello, Noema. How's your mother?
A LITTLE FREAKED OUT.
We'll get you back to her in a jiffy.
Won't we, Rachel?
ABSOLUTELY. BUT THE REASON WE'RE ALL HERE RIGHT NOW IS MY BROTHER.
LUCIFER, THIS IS PAUL.
HI, LUCIFER. **WOW.**
YOU'RE EVEN **COOLER** THAN I THOUGHT.
Hello, Paul. You're... well...a baby.
A BABY WITH INFORMATION YOU NEED.
I hope so. My **martini** is evaporating in this heat.

IT'S GOOD ALL RIGHT. IT'S ABOUT THE PRESENCE.
YOU SEE, UP THERE THEY DON'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO YOUNG SOULS WAITING FOR BODIES.
I NEVER DID.
SO THEY TALK IN FRONT OF US. ABOUT ALL KINDS OF THINGS. SECRETS.
INCLUDING THE PRESENCE'S PLANS.
TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW. EVERYTHING.
THE PRESENCE LIED WHEN HE SAID HE'D LEAVE THE WORLD ALONE.
THE MOMENT HE'S DONE REBUILDING THE SILVER CITY--WHEN IT FILLS THE SKY--HE'S GOING TO ATTACK.
THAT'S WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF. THE TREACHEROUS FOOL.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP, PAUL.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DID, BUT THANK YOU FOR BRINGING HIM BACK TO ME.
YOUR BROTHER MIGHT HAVE SAVED US ALL.
NOW LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU. WE HAVE TO STAY AHEAD OF THE PRESENCE.
THINGS WILL BE HAPPENING SOON.
WHEN THEY DO, I'M GOING TO NEED ALL YOUR HELP.
EVEN ME?
MAYBE NOT YOU.
DAMN.

RAPHAEL?
HEAL me, Raphael.
Free me of this CONTAMINATION.
WHAT *IS* THIS?
I HAVE TO TELL LUCIFER.
BUT NOT NOW. A FEW MORE MINUTES WON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

CLOSED BY ORDER OF LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
THEY CAME AND HUSTLED EVERYBODY OUT AN HOUR AGO. IT WAS *AWFUL.*
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
CRACCKK!
WE'LL DO WHAT WE *ALWAYS* DO. WATER THE *THIRSTY* AND THE *DAMNED.*
AND *DESTROY* ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STOP US.
MAYBE I'LL EVEN PLAY THE PIANO.

WHRR AH FERRK?
WHAT THE *HOLY FUCK?*
LUCIFER.
OH, YOU ARE *SO* DEAD.

ARE YOU THE MAN I TALKED TO ON THE PHONE?
LULA! HOW DELIGHTFUL TO FINALLY MEET YOU. DID YOU BRING WHAT I ASKED FOR?
HERE IT IS.
YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON TO BRING ME A BIT OF GOOD NEWS TODAY.
OH. *COOL.*
I'M GLAD TO HELP.
LORIN?
LULA?
HOW DID YOU *FIND* ME?
I DIDN'T. I'M JUST HERE DOING A JOB.
HOW ARE YOU?
STRANGE. I'M IN LOVE WITH AN ANGEL. HOW ARE YOU?
I MET A TALKING BABY. I THINK HE'S THE DEVIL.
NO, THAT'S THE DEVIL OVER THERE. SEE? HE'S ALL GROWN UP.
IT WAS STILL A *REALLY WEIRD* BABY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. THANK YOU FOR COMING TO EX LUX TONIGHT.
EXISTENCE HAS TAKEN SOME ODD TURNS OF LATE. JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, IT SEEMED ALMOST LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD.
BUT WE SURVIVED.
TO COMMEMORATE THESE STRANGE DAYS, I'D LIKE TO PLAY FOR YOU "AS TIME GOES BY."
EARTHQUAKE!

HELLO, FATHER.
I'M *HOME.*

DID YOU *MISS* ME, FATHER?
I HAVE SO MUCH TO SHOW YOU.

IT'S NO USE. I HAVE YOUR MORNINGSTAR POWER NOW.
HAVING IT AND KNOWING WHAT TO DO WITH IT ARE VERY DIFFERENT THINGS.

A NEW TRICK? IT WON'T SAVE YOU.
EX LUX
In case you hadn't noticed, you're *down* a man.

"Never can true reconcilement grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."
— John Milton, Paradise Lost
YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM ME!

FORMS OF FIRE

Blood in the Streets part five

I WOULDN'T *DREAM* OF IT.
YOU'RE ***BLEEDING,*** OLD MAN.
AND THAT PORTAL TRICK OF YOURS WON'T WORK TWICE.

SHIT!

GAAAH!
DID I JUST **KICK AN ANGEL'S ASS?**
NOT QUITE. BUT YOU CERTAINLY BRUISED HIS EGO.
I'M **AWESOME!**
DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY.
WHERE DID MY ANGEL GO?
THIS SWORD CAN RIP APART **TIME** AND **SPACE**. YOU JUST GAVE MICHAEL A LITTLE PUSH.

HEY, ASSHOLE. YOU MANIPULATED ME.
I DID NO SUCH THING.
YOU DIDN'T WANT GABRIEL'S HEART. YOU JUST WANTED ME TO GET IT BECAUSE OF MY LITTLE...PROBLEM.
YOUR BOUNDLESS DESIRE FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION? I KNEW ABOUT IT, BUT WHAT YOU DID WAS YOUR OWN CHOICE.
AND NOW I'M A FUCKING JEDI. WHY WOULD YOU WANT THAT?
THIS FIGHT IS FAR FROM OVER AND I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR HELP.
IS THERE...?
IF YOU ASK IF THERE'S ANY MONEY IN IT, I'M GOING TO SEND YOU WHERE I SENT MICHAEL.
WHERE'S THAT?
NO IDEA. BUT IT'S SO FAR AWAY THAT I DOUBT HE'LL EVER FIND HIS WAY BACK.
FINE. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
WATCH OVER EX LUX AND THE STAFF UNTIL I GET BACK.
HOW EXCITING. CAN I AT LEAST HAVE A DRINK?
NO.
CAN I TAKE A SELFIE WITH YOUR ANGEL? MINE'S GONE.
THAT'S MY SON.
CAN I TAKE A SELFIE WITH YOUR SON?
MAKE IT FAST.

HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN, JIGGETY JIG.
THIS ISN'T **OVER,** YOU KNOW.
I'D PROBABLY BE MORE **FRIGHTENED** IF YOU COULD STAND.
YOU'RE **BLEEDING,** TOO.
IT'S WHAT WARRIORS **DO.** IF YOU UNDERSTOOD THAT, YOU WOULDN'T TRY TO USE IT AS A TAUNT.
WHY AREN'T YOU TAKING ME TO THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS?
I WANT TO SEE SOMEONE FIRST AND LET HER LAUGH IN YOUR FACE.

I *TOLD* YOU THIS WASN'T OVER.
WHO *DID* THIS?
THE GHOST GIRL. ROSEMARY.
WHERE *IS* SHE?
EVEN BEFORE LADY MAZIKEEN HAD ***FALLEN,*** SHE WAS RUNNING FOR THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS.

EVEN IF YOU KILL MOTHER AND ME, WE STILL WIN. **MAZIKEEN IS GONE.** YOUR FUTURE IS DONE.
ALL YOUR BATTLES AND SPEECHES, THEY AMOUNT TO JUST ONE THING: AN **OLD MAN** IN A ROOM ALONE UNTIL THE END OF TIME.
IZANAMI!
GIVE ME THE GHOST AND YOU MAY HAVE YOUR BOY BACK.
IF YOU WERE GOING TO **KILL** OUR SON YOU WOULD HAVE ALREADY DONE SO.
DON'T **BORE ME** WITH IDLE THREATS.
YOU'RE RIGHT. TAKEHIKO IS STILL YOUNG AND FOOLISH. HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO DIE FOR THAT.
YOU, HOWEVER, ARE **NEITHER YOUNG NOR FOOLISH.**
AND YOU HAVE **BEGGED** FOR DEATH FOR CENTURIES.

LUCIFER! STOP!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
SHE KILLED MAZIKEEN!
I KNOW. AND WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, I'LL HELP YOU GET YOUR REVENGE. BUT NOT NOW.
YOU HAVE TO COME WITH ME OR THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANYTHING LEFT TO FIGHT FOR.
VERY WELL.
TAKEHIKO, TELL YOUR MOTHER THERE IS NOWHERE SHE CAN HIDE, NO ARMY SHE CAN SUMMON, THAT WILL SAVE HER THIS TIME.
HAVE FUN BACK IN YOUR RUINED MORTAL KINGDOM. MOTHER AND I WILL BE TOASTING TO ROSEMARY TONIGHT.
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
NICKEL BEER NIGHT. I TOLD HIM IT WAS A BAD IDEA.
HUSH, ARABELLE.
NOW, WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT I HAD TO LEAVE MAZIKEEN'S SIDE?

I WENT TO THE SILVER CITY.
alone? that wasn't very bright.
I SAW THE PRESENCE. HE WAS WITH RAPHAEL.
YOU SAW RAPHAEL? HOW IS HE?
HE'S FINE.
IT LOOKED LIKE HE WAS TENDING TO THE PRESENCE. AS IF HE WERE SICK OR INJURED.
injured *how?*
I DON'T KNOW. HE SAID, "FREE ME OF THIS *CONTAMINATION.*"
interesting.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS?
perhaps.
THAT DREAMY MR. SANTE WAS HERE AGAIN. HE SAID HE COULD HELP US FIX THE PLACE.
HE'S A GREAT GUY. JUST THE BEST.
you *both* think so? how about the others?
I THINK I CAN SAFELY SAY THAT WE ALL WANT TO HAVE HIS BABIES.
I'M SORRY I INTERRUPTED EARLIER. I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT RAPHAEL.
of course. but right now I want you to go to iain sante's office and tell him to meet me here tomorrow. speak *only* to him.
UM. OKAY.

HOW IS TALKING TO SANTE GOING TO HELP US?
MR. SANTE IS JUST A BIT TOO SAINTLY, DON'T YOU THINK?
I MEAN, EVEN I'M NOT THAT BELOVED.
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.
NOW TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE PRESENCE.
WOW. IT'S NICE IN HERE.
I'M SORRY I HAD TO COME HERE ALL DIRTY LIKE THIS.
IT'S FINE. I SAW THE EX LUX'S RADICAL RENOVATION.
HEH. YEAH.
MR. MORNINGSTAR WANTED ME TO TELL YOU TO MEET HIM THERE TOMORROW.
WHY DIDN'T HE JUST CALL?
HE SAID IT LIKE IT WAS EXTRA IMPORTANT AND THAT I SHOULD TALK TO YOU PERSONALLY.
AND YOU DID A GREAT JOB. TELL ME, LORIN, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK FOR ME?
I HAVE A BUSINESS PARTNER WHO TAKES AN INTEREST IN PROMISING YOUNG MEN LIKE YOU.
REALLY? I'M PROMISING?
VERY MUCH. A CLEVER, RESOURCEFUL, MALLEABLE BOY.

DON'T BE SCARED, MY BOY.
I KNOW I'M NOT AS HANDSOME AS YOUNG IAIN HERE, BUT I MADE HIM WHAT HE IS. ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
IT'S TRUE.
YOU HAVE BEEN ***MALTREATED*** AND ***UNDERESTIMATED*** YOUR WHOLE LIFE. ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
DESERTED BY FRIENDS AND LOVERS ALIKE.
AND ***USED*** BY MEN LIKE THE SO-CALLED MR. MORNINGSTAR.
THAT'S NOT TRUE. HE GAVE ME A JOB AND A PLACE TO STAY. HE'S GREAT.
YOU ARE A ***CHILD.***
ONLY I CAN SAVE YOU. ONLY I CAN MAKE YOU ***GREAT.***
SHOULD I HAVE SECURITY GRAB HIM?
NO. HE'LL BE ***BACK.*** JUST AS YOU WERE.
IT WAS THE BEST DECISION OF MY LIFE.
YES, IT WAS.

I WANT HER MASK.
I WANNNT HERRR PRETTTY CAPE.
I WANT HER THRONE.
AND HER HEAD.
A LOVELY BIT OF VICIOUSNESS, MY LADY.
BRAVVVO.
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH VICIOUSNESS. I'LL PUT THE HEAD ON A STAKE OUTSIDE SO THAT ANY WHO DOUBT WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE CAN SEE.
ROSEMARY, CHILD?
I GIVE YOU THE HONOR.
OF TAKING HER...?
I COULDN'T.
THE HUNTER ALWAYS GETS TO SKIN THE KILL. IT'S TRADITION.
ALSO, CONSIDER IT ONE LAST TEST OF LOYALTY.

DID YOU SEE SANTE?
EX LUX
YEAH. I TOLD HIM WHAT YOU TOLD ME.
YOU LOOK A BIT FRAYED AROUND THE EDGES. WHAT HAPPENED?
THERE WAS THIS *OTHER* GUY THERE.
UGLY AND ALL *GRAY* LIKE HE WAS SICK OR NEVER WENT OUT IN THE SUN.
WHAT DID HE SAY?
HE OFFERED ME A JOB. SAID I WAS *SPECIAL,* BUT NOBODY APPRECIATED ME. THEN HE GRABBED ME.
IT FELT LIKE MY HEART WAS ON FIRE.
THE WHOLE *THING* WAS WEIRD.
I'M AFRAID IT'S GOING TO GET WEIRDER.
HOW?
OPEN YOUR SHIRT.

WHAT IS *THAT?!*

PLEASE TELL ME.
A DEMON'S MARK.
MALPHAS.
OH SHIT. DID HE STEAL MY SOUL OR SOMETHING?
NO. BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU DIDN'T LEAVE EX LUX FOR A WHILE. THE ROOM I GAVE YOU IS RELATIVELY INTACT. YOU'LL BE SAFE THERE.
WHO'S MALPHAS?
A COLLECTOR. YOU KNOW. POWER. CONTROL. DARK MAGIC.
AND DUMMIES LIKE YOU.
AND YOU SENT HIM THERE.
YOU KNEW SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN, YOU PRICK.
LORIN, WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT WILL NO DOUBT SAVE LIVES. PERHAPS MANY LIVES. IS THAT ALL RIGHT WITH YOU?
YEAH. RAPHAEL WOULD HAVE DONE IT. HE'S BRAVE.
SO ARE YOU.
DON'T WORRY, KID. I'LL MAKE SURE NO ONE HURTS YOU AGAIN.
NO ONE.

SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE OF QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA, ON I-10.
THANKS FOR DRIVING US TO L.A., MOM.
LIKE I WAS GOING TO LET YOU *HITCHHIKE* FROM FLAGSTAFF?
I COULD HAVE TAKEN US THERE ON A *WALK.*
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME THAT'S ANY LESS DANGEROUS THAN THIS?
I GUESS NOT. BUT IT'S A *DIFFERENT* KIND OF DANGEROUS. MORE OF A METAPHYSICAL, EXISTENTIAL DANGER.
SO, YOUR DANGERS WON'T *KILL US* AND *SUCK THE MARROW* FROM OUR BONES?
SOME, *SURE,* BUT...
WE'LL STICK TO THE FREEWAY FOR NOW. MY INSURANCE DOESN'T COVER EXISTENTIAL BLOWOUTS.
WHAT'S *THAT?*
OH *NO.*

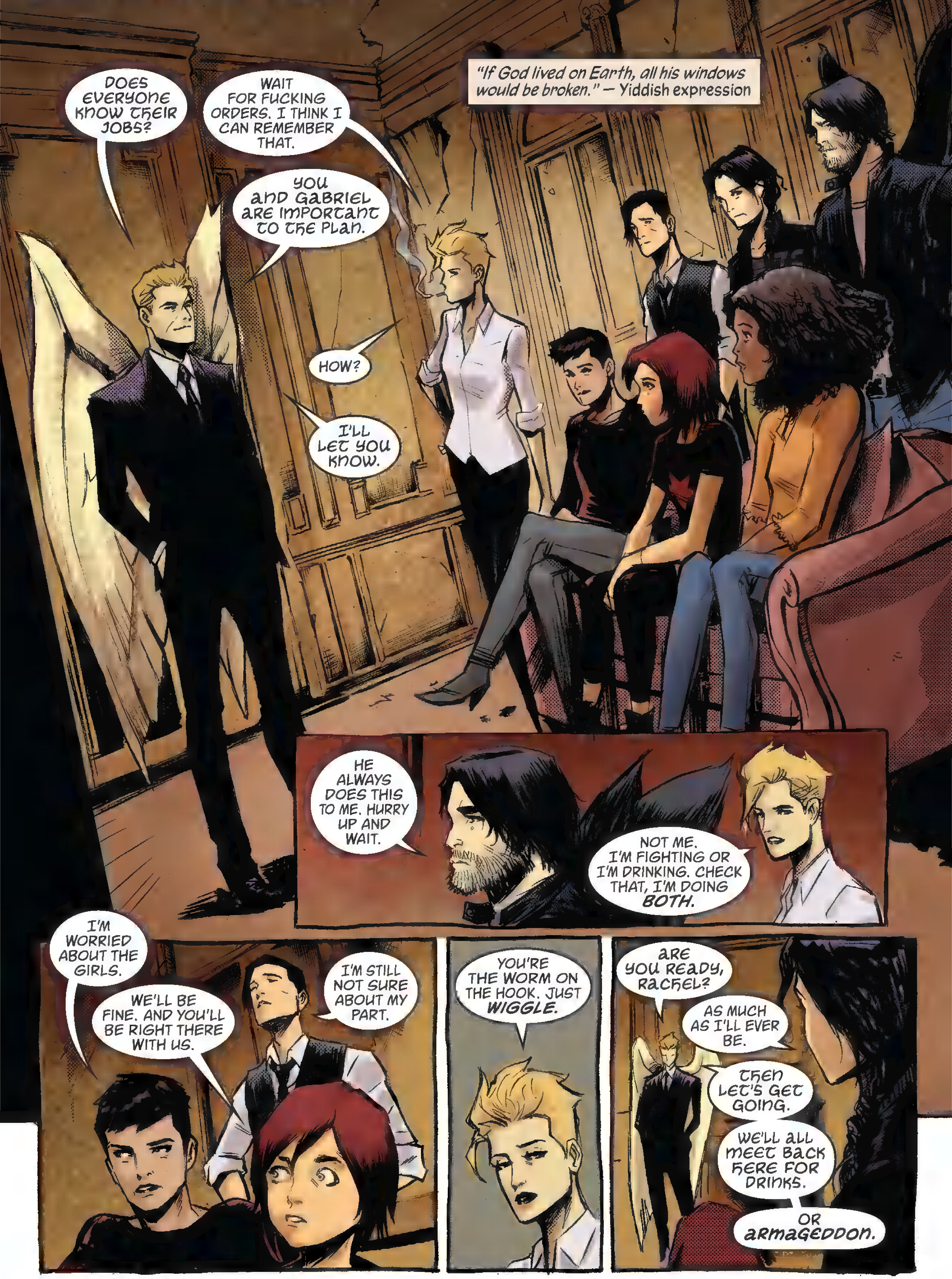
I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D BE HERE SO SOON.
ME NEITHER.
YOU **KNEW** ABOUT THEM AND DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING?
I DIDN'T WANT TO **SCARE** YOU.
WELL, KIDDO, IT DIDN'T WORK.
DON'T WORRY. WE HAVE A SECRET WEAPON.
WHAT?
RACHEL, YOU KNOW ALL THE STUFF I SAID ABOUT STAYING ON THE FREEWAY?
YES?
FORGET IT. GET US THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
TURN NOW!
HANG ON!

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHAT IT MEANS?
What *what* means?
WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE PRESENCE.
WILL YOU *PLEASE* STOP PLAYING GAMES?
I've never been more *serious* in my life.
I believe I know how to kill him.
BELIEVE? YOU DON'T *KNOW?*
I'm reasonably sure. But I won't know for *certain* until we're face to face.
However, before I do it you have to promise me something.
If I am wrong and I *die,* promise me you'll take Arabelle and the remains of Mazikeen's miserable demon horde to the house of windowless rooms and kill *everyone* you find inside.
WITH *PLEASURE.*

LEE GEE

An End, A Beginning

Blood in the Streets conclusion


"If God lived on Earth, all his windows would be broken." — Yiddish expression
DOES EVERYONE KNOW THEIR JOBS?
WAIT FOR FUCKING ORDERS. I THINK I CAN REMEMBER THAT.
YOU AND GABRIEL ARE IMPORTANT TO THE PLAN.
HOW?
I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
HE ALWAYS DOES THIS TO ME. HURRY UP AND WAIT.
NOT ME. I'M FIGHTING OR I'M DRINKING. CHECK THAT, I'M DOING *BOTH*.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE GIRLS.
WE'LL BE FINE. AND YOU'LL BE RIGHT THERE WITH US.
I'M STILL NOT SURE ABOUT MY PART.
YOU'RE THE WORM ON THE HOOK. JUST *WIGGLE*.
ARE YOU READY, RACHEL?
AS MUCH AS I'LL EVER BE.
THEN LET'S GET GOING.
WE'LL ALL MEET BACK HERE FOR DRINKS.
OR *ARMAGEDDON*.

EXCUSE ME. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH MR. MORNINGSTAR.
I KNOW.
I'LL BE YOUR HOSTESS WHILE WE WAIT. CARE FOR A DRINK?
I DON'T THINK SO.
HAVE ONE. IT MIGHT BE A WHILE.
I SAID *NO.*
BEFORE YOU GET ANY IDEAS, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I BORROWED THIS GUN FROM MY DRIVER. I'M NOT VERY GOOD WITH IT. IT COULD GO OFF ANY MINUTE.
HELL.
I'LL HAVE A MANHATTAN.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
I ENJOY MY DRINK AND YOU CALL YOUR FRIEND AND TELL HIM THAT *LORIN* WANTS TO JOIN YOU.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
THEN I'LL JUST SHOOT YOU NOW.
WAIT...

I'VE NEVER WALKED *THIS* FAR BEFORE.
CONCEPTUALLY, THE SILVER CITY ISN'T REALLY THAT FAR.
I'M *SCARED.* WHAT IF I CAN'T FIND MY WAY BACK? WHO'LL TAKE CARE OF PAUL?
IF YOU GET LOST, I'LL FIND YOU.
ARE YOU *SURE?* THE UNIVERSE IS A BIG PLACE.
ANYWHERE. I'LL FIND YOU. BUT MY ADVICE IS TO *NOT* GET LOST.
DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS GOING TO *WORK?* DON'T ANGELS HAVE SUPER-SENSES OR SOMETHING?
THEY WON'T BE LOOKING FOR THIS--SOMETHING THEY'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
IT WAS. NOW IT'S A CHEAP PARODY. WHEN THIS IS OVER, I'LL SHOW YOU ITS TRUE MAGNIFICENCE.
OR ARMAGEDDON.
ALL THE MORE REASON TO HURRY HOME.

MAZIKEEN'S THRONE ROOM IN THE RUINS OF HELL.
LOOK UPON ME AND KNOW YOUR QUEEN. HELL IS ***MINE.***
PERHAPS NOT AS MUCH AS YOU WOULD BELIEVE.
WE HAD A ***PACT!***
I DON'T INTEND MY ***HEAD*** TO BE YOUR NEXT TROPHY.
OR MMMINE.
YOU ARE MAKING A GRAVE ERROR.
HELL IS OURZZZ OR NNNO ONE'ZZZ.
MOTHER! DON'T GIVE ***IN*** TO THIS FILTH!

THAT WAS NEVER MY INTENTION.
ATTACK! KILL THEM BOTH!

WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS VERY STUPID.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF INTO.
I'VE KNOWN MEN LIKE YOU BEFORE. MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE. ALWAYS IN CONTROL.
WATCH WHAT A SCARED MOM AND A COUPLE OF KIDS CAN DO TO YOUR PLANS.
WHILE WE WAIT FOR YOUR MASTER STROKE, DO YOU MIND IF I SMOKE?
I JUST SAID THERE ARE *KIDS* HERE. OF COURSE YOU CAN'T SMOKE.
THAT'S *HIM*.
AND NOW THE FUN BEGINS.
LORIN, MY BOY. HOW GOOD IT IS TO SEE YOU.
I HAVE SUCH ***PLANS*** FOR US.

HELLO, DEMON.
WE KNEW YOU'D COME. WE *SAW* IT.
AND NOW YOU'RE DONE.
LORIN, WHO ARE THESE CREATURES?
REMOVE THEM IMMEDIATELY.
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU TRIED TO DO TO ME, BUT I KNOW IT WAS *BAD*. YOU'RE *NEVER* GOING TO DO IT AGAIN.
WATCH YOUR TONE, BOY. YOU CARRY MY MARK. I *OWN* YOU.
NO, YOU DON'T.
LOOK DOWN.
YOU'RE IN A *BINDING CIRCLE*, DEMON. *LUCIFER* SHOWED US HOW.
BUT DON'T WORRY. YOU WON'T BE IN IT LONG.

THEY LOOK LIKE *THEY'RE* HAVING FUN.
TELL ME AGAIN WHAT *WE'RE* DOING?
WAITING FOR WORD FROM LUCIFER.
YOU KNOW THE WORD I NOTICED EARLIER?
ARMAGEDDON?
YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU'RE GOING TO SIT HERE WHILE THE GIRLS BARBECUE A DEMON AND RACHEL GETS TO GO TO HEAVEN?
YES.
AND HERE I THOUGHT ANGELS WERE THESE BIG *CELESTIAL* BEINGS.
WITH BALLS. LIKE LUCIFER.
I'M NOTHING LIKE LUCIFER.
BELIEVE ME, I KNOW. *HE'D* NEVER SIT AROUND LIKE THIS.
THE LAST THING LUCIFER TOLD ME HE WANTED ME TO DO WAS RETURN TO *HELL*. ARE YOU SO SURE YOU WANT TO TEMPT THE ABYSS, MORTAL?
FUCK *YES!*
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. LUCIFER WOULDN'T WAIT AROUND, WOULD HE?
LET'S GO!

HALT, SON OF PERDITION.
HOW DARE YOU COME TO THE FATHER'S DOMAIN UNBIDDEN?
He's not *my* Father.
Yours neither.

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME DROPPING IN LIKE THIS.
I THOUGHT IT WAS TIME FOR US TO HAVE A CHAT.
How dare you invade MY DOMAIN, filthy beast?
FILTH. THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
WELL, NOT SO MUCH TALK AS KILL YOU.
How can you hope to kill ME?
I JUST TOLD YOU. CONTAMINATION. CORRUPTION. BRIADACH TOLD ME, IN HIS WAY, AND GABRIEL CONFIRMED IT.
YOUR PURITY-- WHICH YOU TREASURE-- DOES YOU NO GOOD IN THE FACE OF ITS OPPOSITE.
ME.
Enough! I shall DESTROY you, as I should have long ago.
YOU CAN BARELY STAND TO TOUCH ME. I WONDER...
...HOW WOULD YOU COPE WITH THE HEART OF A FALLEN ANGEL?

DIE, vile thing!

YOU BEGGED TO SEE DAMNATION. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THIS IS HELL? WHERE'S THE PITCHFORKS AND FIRE? THE RIVERS OF BOILING SHIT?
I'VE SEEN SCARIER STUFF ON HALLOWEEN HAYRIDES.
THERE'S NO PLEASING YOU.
CALL THEM *OFF,* WHORE.
YOU, BOY, TELL HER TO STOP.
NEVER!
TAKEHIKO!
YOU'RE BLUFFING.
IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, YOU'RE A BIGGER FOOL THAN I THOUGHT.
FIRST WE GUT THE BOY, THEN--

NOT SO *FAST,* JIMINY CRICKET.
NO!
YES!

HOW... ARE YOU... HERE?
THE DEMON **YEQON**--A SHAPE-SHIFTER--TOOK MY PLACE. **HE** IS THE HERO TODAY.
AS IS ROSEMARY. YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT BECAUSE I MUST LEAVE SOON ON URGENT MATTERS, **SHE** WILL BE MY REGENT IN HELL.
ROSEMARY, HOW COULD YOU **BETRAY** ME LIKE THIS?
I STILL LOVE YOU, TAKEHIKO. BUT YOUR MOM IS A STONE **BITCH.**
THERE'S NO WAY I WANT **HER** FOR A MOTHER-IN-LAW.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
MERCY.
A QUICK DEATH, THEN?
NOT AT ALL. YOU MAY BOTH RETURN TO THE HOUSE OF WINDOWLESS ROOMS. THERE, YOU WILL BE SEALED INSIDE **FOREVER.**
A HAPPY FAMILY FOR ALL ETERNITY.
I GUESS MAZIKEEN DIDN'T REALLY NEED OUR HELP.
YEAH, BUT **I** GOT TO SLAY A GODDAMN DEMON!
AND YOU HELPED, TOO.
HOW?
UM...IT'S THE **THOUGHT** THAT COUNTS?
LET'S GO HOME.

AAAAGGHH!
Putridity!
INFESTATION!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
IN THE END EVEN POOR, SAD **GABRIEL** IS STRONGER THAN YOU.
LOOK AT YOU. CAN YOU AFFORD TO TOUCH ME AGAIN?
STAY STILL AND I'LL MAKE THIS QUICK.
Do you really think a mere sword can slay ME?
OF COURSE NOT. BUT IT WILL SEND YOU AWAY.
IN A *THOUSAND* PIECES.

CHILDREN, come to me!
Protect the FATHER!
PROTECT THE FATHER!
TOO LATE!

WHAT?
WHERE ARE WE?
LORIN!
TAKE ME *TO* HIM!
FOLLOW ME.
BY THE WAY, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER A THANK-YOU.

LORIN!
RAPHAEL!
AWW. TRUE LOVE.
BEEN THERE. OVER IT.
WAIT. IT'S OVER IN HEAVEN? I MISSED THAT, TOO?
YOU NEEDN'T MISS ANOTHER MOMENT, BROTHER GABRIEL. I SHALL REMAIN ON EARTH WITH LORIN.
TAKE MY HEART AND RETURN TO THE SILVER CITY RESTORED.
I...NO...
-SIGH-
MUST I DO EVERYTHING?
OH! I CAN FEEL IT.
IT BEATS!

AS FOR YOU...
YOUR IMPS KILLED MALPHAS. I'M DEFENSELESS.
IS THE BIG, BAD DEVIL GOING TO MURDER AN UNARMED MAN?
NORMALLY, YES. BUT NOT TODAY.
YOU TRIED TO SHUTTER EX LUX, SO I'M GIVING YOU A CHOICE.
YOU CAN DIE PAINLESSLY AND GO STRAIGHT TO HELL. OR YOU CAN WALK OUT OF HERE.
OF COURSE, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET PAST MY STAFF TO REACH THE DOOR.
YOU SEE, THIS ISN'T JUST A CLUB. IT'S A SANCTUARY FOR EXISTENCE'S OUTCASTS.
AND YOU TRIED TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM THEM.
I... I CHOOSE HELL.
THEY'LL BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU.

GOD IS *DEAD.* OR DEAD ENOUGH FOR OUR PURPOSES.
THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE UNIVERSE *NEEDS* A GOD TO OVERSEE IT.
ANY VOLUNTEERS?
COUNT ME OUT.
YOU WEREN'T IN THE RUNNING. BUT YOU'LL PLAY YOUR *PART.*
WITH YOUR NEW *POWER,* YOU'LL BE GOD'S AGENT ON EARTH.
IS THERE...?
ANY MONEY IN IT? OODLES.
I'M *IN.*
I DON'T WANT TO BE A GOD. I HARDLY KNOW WHO *I* AM.
ME, TOO. I CAN'T EVEN DATE YET.
YOU CAN'T FORCE THEM, YOU KNOW.
YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE *YOU'RE* IN THE RUNNING, TOO, RIGHT?
I AM?
VERY MUCH SO.
THIS IS RIDICULOUS. NONE OF *US* IS QUALIFIED-- ONLY *ELAINE BELLOC.*
WHO HAS REFUSED THE JOB ON *NUMEROUS* OCCASIONS.
I'M AFRAID IT'S GOING TO BE SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM. SOMEONE TRUSTWORTHY AND WHO *DOESN'T* WANT THE JOB.

IF WE GO ALONG WITH THIS, HOW WOULD WE CHOOSE?
REGGIE WILL HELP WITH THAT. COME OVER HERE, REGGIE.
SURE, BOSS.
SINCE ONE OF YOU WILL BE GUIDING MORTAL KIND, IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE FOR A **MORTAL** TO CHOOSE WHO THAT WILL BE.
ARE YOU READY TO DO YOUR PART, REGGIE?
FUCK ME!
I MEAN, SURE!
WHAT ARE YOU PROPOSING?
REGGIE, PICK A NUMBER BETWEEN ONE AND TEN.
OH SHIT, I **LOVE** THIS.
I'LL STEP OUT OF THE ROOM SO NO ONE CAN SAY I INFLUENCED THE OUTCOME.
DO YOU HAVE A NUMBER, REGGIE?
FOUR.
THINK OF ANOTHER ONE AND **DON'T** SAY IT THIS TIME.
RIGHT. SORRY.
I'M A BIT DISAPPOINTED THAT YOU DIDN'T **DESTROY** HELL WHEN YOU FOUND ME DEAD.
DON'T BE ABSURD. I KNEW IT WASN'T **YOU.** I SIMPLY PLAYED ALONG KNOWING YOU HAD A PLAN.
AND IF IT REALLY **HAD** BEEN ME?
I WOULD HAVE BURNED ALL CREATION.
ALWAYS A ROMANTIC.
DAMN. BEST TWO OUT OF THREE?

WHAT ARE YOU SMIRKING ABOUT?
THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE WILL BE IN GOOD HANDS.
WON'T *THAT* BE NICE FOR A CHANGE?
EX LUX
EX LUX IS GOING TO NEED A COAT OF PAINT.
WE'LL HAVE TO REBUILD FROM SCRATCH.
DON'T TAKE TOO LONG. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE COMPETITION.
ME.
YOU'RE OPENING A CLUB?
WHY NOT? IT LOOKS LIKE FUN.
LET ME GUESS. IAIN WILL GIVE YOU REAL ESTATE LESSONS.
IN LIEU OF BEING FLAYED FOR ALL ETERNITY.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE IN L.A., I GUESS WE'LL BE SEEING MORE OF EACH OTHER.
POSSIBLY. I'LL BE VERY BUSY.
ME, TOO.
POOR US.
I SUPPOSE I *WON*. BUT THE REST OF YOU HAVE TO DO THE JOB *WITH* ME.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT.
SURE I CAN. I'M *GOD*.
The End

LAST CALL

He's faced down God Himself, and lived (and died, and lived again) to tell the tale. Now Lucifer Morningstar, the most irresistible antihero in all of Creation, is free to turn the final page on his past and begin a brand-new chapter in his legendarily eventful life.

But before he can start booking retirement cruises, there's still one small matter that requires his attention: an all-powerful entity has usurped his deceased Father's place in Heaven and is preparing to extinguish every last vestige of free will throughout the universe.

The Lightbringer has always been the contrary type, and he's not about to change his ways for anyone—or anything—just because they occupy the Throne of Light. And while the former Lord of Hell now rules only within the boundaries of his nightclub, Ex Lux, he still has powerful allies and devoted enemies—all of whom are ripe for manipulation.

Together, this motley militia are poised to take their fight from the heights of the Silver City to the depths of the Inferno. Against them stand multiple armies of angels, demons, and every dread thing imaginable that lies between them. Can Lucifer overcome their onslaught and keep his club, his city, and his indomitable independence intact? Or, after countless millennia, has the Devil's tab finally come due?

Find out in LUCIFER VOL. 3: BLOOD IN THE STREETS—the shocking conclusion to the newest saga of the Fallen One from the acclaimed creative team of Richard Kadrey, Lee Garbett, Antonio Fabela, Holly Black, Marco Rudy, and Ben Templesmith, collecting issues #13–19 of the signature VERTIGO series.

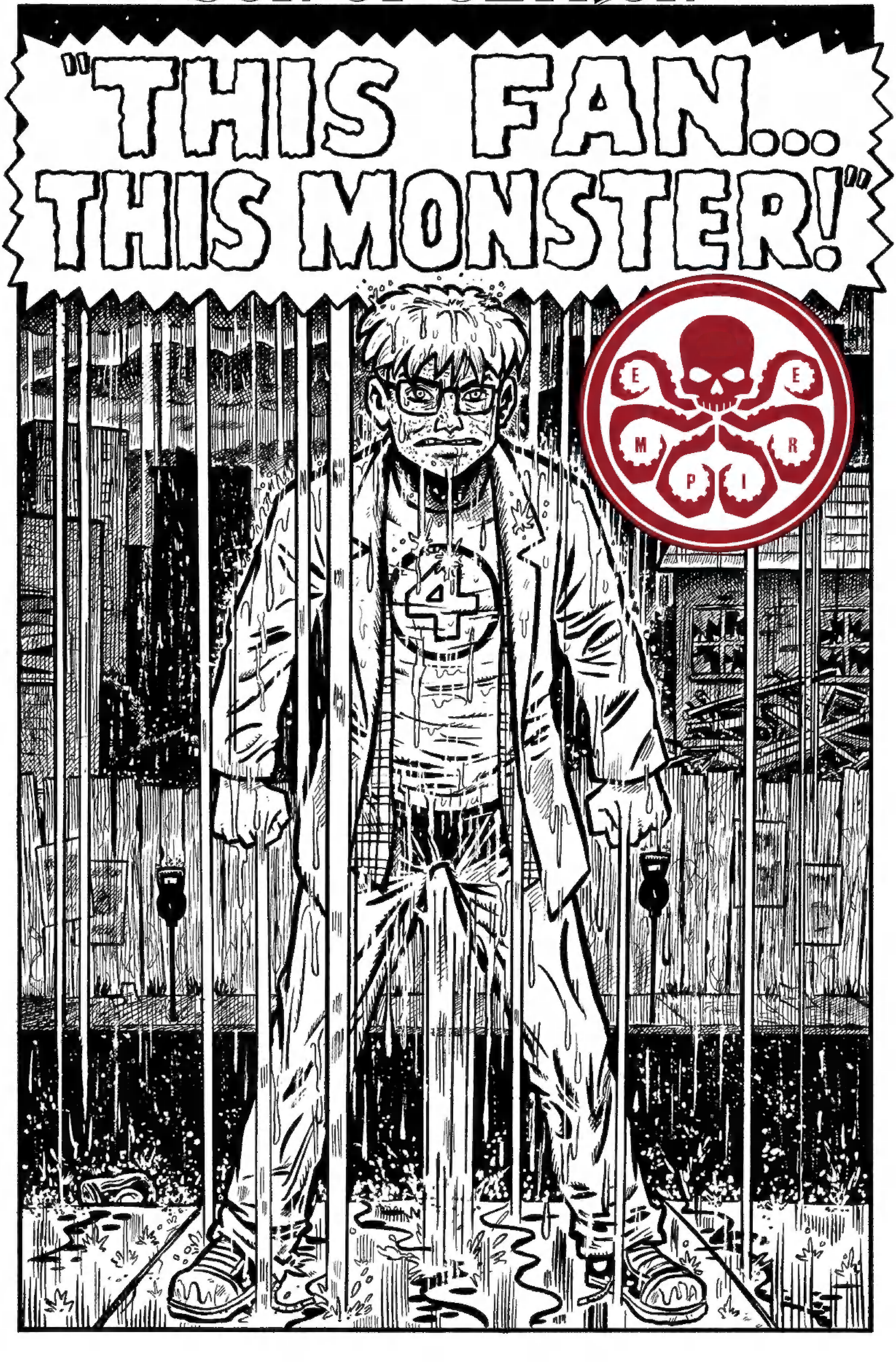
"This is Vertigo at its very best—a beautifully handled, classic character with a fresh twist."
—Jock, artist on BATMAN and Wytches

"Literate, smart, gloriously nasty. I can't wait to see what happens next."
—Neil Gaiman

"An absolute must-read."
—Comicverse

vertigocomics.com

SON OF ULTRON


"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"
E M P I R E